NATION

Are you Indian: Hindutva mob heckles Kargil veteran's kin

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BUSINESS

Microsoft restores services to Nayara before HC hearing

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SPORTS

India refuse to play Pak in WCL 2025 semifinal

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Tsunami warnings across Pacific after 8.8 quake hits Russia

TOKYO, 30 JULY

One of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded struck off Russia's sparsely populated Far East early Wednesday, sending tsunami waves into Japan, Hawaii and the US West Coast. Several people were injured, but none gravely, and no major damage was reported at the time of publishing.

The quake struck at 8.25am Japan time with a magnitude of 8.8 and a depth of about 21km, according to the US Geological Survey. It was centred about 120km from the Russian city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Multiple aftershocks as strong as 6.9 magnitude followed.

Later, the Klyuchevskoy volcano in Russia, the tallest and most active in Eurasia, erupted.

According to the Russian Academy of Sciences' United Geophysical Service, glowing lava began descending down its western slope, accompanied by powerful explosions and a fiery glow visible for miles. Scientists say this sequence of seismic and volcanic activity is not unusual in the tectonically volatile region.

The earthquake appeared to be the strongest recorded since the 9.0 magnitude earthquake off northeastern Japan in March 2011 that caused a massive tsunami that set off meltdowns at a nuclear power plant. Only a few stronger earthquakes have ever been measured around the world.

- No threat to India following the quake in Russia.
- Largest quake since Japan's 9 magnitude jolt in 2011.
- Epicentre: 1,467 km from Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia, at 4.07am

Countries under tsunami threat

Russia, Japan, US (Hawaii and California), Canada (British Columbia, Vancouver), Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, New Zealand, China, Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Chile, among others

A tsunami height of 3 to 4m was recorded in Kamchatka, 60cm on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, while tsunami waves about 2 to 5ft high reached San Francisco early Wednesday, officials said.

Russia's Oceanology Institute said tsunami waves might have been as high as 10 to 15m in some sections of the Kamchatka coast. Authorities warned the risk from the 8.8 magnitude quake could last for hours, and millions of people potentially in the path of the waves were initially told to move away from the shore or seek high ground. However, the danger already appeared to be lessening in several, with authorities downgrading their warnings in Japan, Hawaii and parts of Russia. *—PTI*

PM's hug diplomacy fails: 'Dost' Donald slaps 25% tariffs on India

US will also slap India with extra penalty for buying Russian oil, defence supply

WASHINGTON
NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced a 25 per cent tariff on all goods imported from India, effective 1 August. In addition, he declared an unspecified penalty on India for continuing large-scale purchases of Russian crude oil and military equipment.

The announcement came just a day after Indian officials confirmed that a US trade delegation would visit New Delhi on 25 August for the sixth round of negotiations towards a bilateral trade agreement. The sudden imposition of tariffs is widely seen as a pressure tactic by Washington, especially after securing favourable trade terms with Japan, the UK, and the EU.

It remains unclear whether the new 25 per cent tariff will be added to the existing 10 per cent baseline tariff or replace it.

On social media, Trump labelled India's trade policies as "most strenuous and obnoxious". He criticised New Delhi for increasing its reliance on Russian imports at a time when, he said, the world was seeking to isolate Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine.

India's crude oil imports from Russia have surged from just 0.2 per cent before the war to around 35–40 per cent of its total oil intake, making India the second-largest buyer of Russian oil after China. India has also continued significant defence procurement from Moscow.

$4.5B crude oil was imported from US.

Despite China being Russia's largest oil importer, the US has so far refrained from imposing similar penalties on Beijing. India is the first country to face such action for Russian imports.

Responding to the development, the Central government stated it is examining the implications of the tariffs and remains hopeful of concluding a fair and balanced trade deal.

The announcement rattled markets, with the rupee posting its sharpest single-day fall in over three years, plunging by 89 paise to a record low of Rs 87.8 against the US dollar.

Indian industry bodies expressed disappointment, warning that the tariffs would hurt exports and worsen global trade uncertainty.

Earlier, on 2 April, Trump had announced a 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods, suspended temporarily for 90 days until 9 July, and later extended to 1 August

> **President Trump has slapped a tariff of 25 per cent plus penalty on imports from India. All that 'taarif' between him and 'Howdy Modi' has meant little**
>
> -Jairam Ramesh, Congress General secretary

The duo has always greeted each other like long-lost brothers, but PM Modi'S hug diplomacy seems to have not worked with Trump ***PHOTO: PTI***

Among Asian competitors, the US has levied 20 per cent on Vietnam, 25 per cent on Malaysia, 35 per cent on Bangladesh, and 36 per cent on Thailand.

India's trade surplus with the US in 2024–25 stood at approximately USD 44.4 billion, with USD 35.3 billion in goods and USD 3.2 billion in services.

Steel and aluminium imports attract a 50 per cent duty, with autos at 25 per cent. *—PTI*

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5 nations facing highest tariffs

Brazil:	50%
Cambodia:	49%
Vietnam:	46%
Myanmar:	44%
Bangladesh:	35%

The numbers do not 'lie'

Despite Trump's claim of "little trade," US remains India's largest trading partner.

- $186B: Trade between India & US in 2024 ($86.5B exports; $45.3B imports)
- 18% of India's goods exports go to the US
- 6.22% of India's imports come from the US
- 10.73% of India's total bilateral trade is with the US

Breakdown of exports to US in 2024

$ 8.1B	Pharmaceuticals
$6.5B	Telecom instruments
$5.3B	Precious stones
$4.1B	Petroleum products
$2.8B	Auto parts
$2.8B	Textile

10K FOLLOWERS ON INSTA

B'luru woman held for promoting Al-Qaeda content

AHMEDABAD, 30 JULY

The Gujarat anti-terrorist squad (ATS) has arrested a woman from Bengaluru for allegedly promoting the anti-national propaganda of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), a banned terror outfit.

The accused, Shama Parveen Ansari, apprehended from her residence in Bengaluru's RT Nagar on 29 July, was in touch with Pakistani entities via phone and email. She used to post provocative content on social media, calling for an "armed revolution or jihad" against the Indian government and spreading discord in the country.

She operated two Facebook pages and an Instagram handle with over 10,000 followers to share inflammatory and anti-India content of the AQIS and some other radical preachers.

Ansari was linked to one of the four persons arrested by the ATS from Delhi, Noida, Ahmedabad and Gujarat's Modasa recently for sharing such contents.

One of the arrested accused, Mohammad Faiq from Delhi, had downloaded provocative videos calling for 'Jihad' from two Facebook and one Instagram accounts and re-posted on his Instagram account after some editing.

Faiq was in contact with the actual user of those three accounts, which were Ansari operated.

Shama Parveen

- She operated two Facebook pages and an Instagram handle with over 10,000 followers to share inflammatory and anti-India content of the AQIS and some other radical preachers.

The ATS Gujarat brought Ansari here on Wednesday on transit remand.

She used to post provocative speeches by AQIS leader Maulana Assim Umar and slain Al-Qaeda leader Anwar al-Awlaki, a police official said.

She had posted a video of Maulana Abdul Aziz of Lahore, encouraging Muslims to wage armed struggle to overthrow the Indian government. *—PTI*

Pak accuses India of fabricating facts

ISLAMABAD/ NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Pakistan has strongly rejected Home Minister Amit Shah's recent statements regarding the killing of three alleged Pakistani militants involved in the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack.

Speaking in Parliament, Shah claimed the men killed in Srinagar this week were responsible for the assault on tourists and that India had verified their identity.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, however, dismissed Shah's account as "replete with fabrications," accusing India of distorting facts and glorifying conflict for domestic political gain. In a statement reported by Dawn, the Ministry said India's "Operation Sindoor" lacked credible investigation and verifiable evidence, leading instead to civilian casualties during cross-border strikes on 6 TO 7 May.

The spokesperson claimed that India failed to meet any strategic objectives and that Pakistan's response, including neutralising Indian military jets. was a "resounding success." Pakistan also criticised India for rejecting an offer of a transparent, independent probe into the Pahalgam incident.

Citing "Operation Mahadev" as insignificant, the Ministry questioned the timing of the alleged militants' deaths, calling it suspicious.

India's accusations of "nuclear blackmail" were branded a "self-serving construct," while Pakistan asserted its deterrence stemmed from conventional capabilities.

LS gives nod to extending Prez's rule in Manipur

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday approved a statutory resolution to extend President's Rule in Manipur for another six months beyond 13 August, even as heated exchanges between treasury and opposition benches led to a temporary adjournment.

President's Rule was imposed on 13 February and first approved by Parliament on 2 April. Each extension requires fresh parliamentary approval every six months. *—PTI*

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CJI NOT A POST OFFICE: SC FLAYS JUSTICE VARMA

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

"The Chief Justice of India is not a post office," the Supreme Court said on Wednesday, pulling up Justice Yashwant Varma over his challenge to an in-house panel's report that found him guilty of misconduct. The sharp rebuke came during a hearing into Justice Varma's plea seeking to invalidate the findings of an inquiry into a massive stash of burnt cash discovered at his Delhi home.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and A G Masih questioned why Justice Varma had appeared before the inquiry committee if he now deemed its process invalid. "Why did you not challenge it then and there?" the court asked, adding that his conduct "does not inspire confidence."

The plea, filed anonymously as XXX v. The panel's report, based on the discovery of the cash during a house fire, found him guilty of misconduct. The court reminded that the in-house inquiry mechanism was established in 1999 and emphasised that the CJI has a constitutional duty. *—PTI*

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WORLD'S MOST EXPENSIVE SAT

ISRO's $1.5B NISAR satellite flies high

SRIHARIKOTA, 30 JULY

India and the US on Wednesday marked their maiden space collaboration with the successful flight of a GSLV rocket that placed an earth observation satellite, jointly developed by ISRO and NASA, in a precise orbit.

The satellite, worth $1.5 billion, is the most expensive Earth observation mission ever launched.

ISRO's GSLV F-16 injected NISAR--NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite, into the intended Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO), after a flight of about 19 minutes and around 745 km.

GSLV "successfully injected NISAR in designated orbit," ISRO said.

At the end of the 27.30 hour countdown, the 51.7 metre tall launch vehicle carrying the 2,393 kg satellite majestically lifted-off from the second launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, here at 5.40pm on Wednesday.

Post the separation from the rocket, the scientists would embark on commissioning the satellite which would take "several days" to position it and meet the mission objectives.

ISRO's launch vehicle GSLV-F16 carrying the NISAR earth observation satellite lifts off from the launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

While ISRO will command and operate the satellite, NASA will provide the orbit maneuver plan and RADAR operations plan. It will be aided with ground station support of both agencies for downloading of the acquired images.

NISAR, with a mission life of five years, will provide critical insights to help governments and decision-makers plan for natural and human-caused hazards. It will help understand how Antartica's ice sheet changes over time, monitor ecosystems across the world, study changes in agriculture and provide insights into forest structure. *—PTI*

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Festive season: Spl trains to link City-T'puram

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

The South Western Railway announced special express trains between Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal, Bengaluru and Thiruvananthapuram North to manage the anticipated surge in passenger traffic during the upcoming festive season. According to an official statement issued on Wednesday, Train Nos 06523/06524 SMVT Bengaluru–Thiruvananthapuram North Express Special will operate six trips in each direction. The trains will halt at the following stations in both directions: Krishnarajapuram, Bangarapet, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Podanur, Palakkad, Thrissur, Aluva, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Changanassery, Tiruvalla, Chengannur, Mavelikara, Kayamkulam, Kollam, and Varkala Sivagiri. *—PTI*

4 missing after boat capsizes off Bhatkal coast

KARWAR, 30 JULY

Four fishermen are missing after a fishing boat capsized in the Arabian Sea off the Bhatkal coast in State's Uttara Kannada district on Wednesday, coastal security police said. The vessel, carrying six crew members, overturned under rough sea conditions while at sea. Coastal security police said two fishermen were rescued by nearby boats and shifted to the Bhatkal Government Hospital for treatment. Search and rescue operations are underway, led by the coastal security police, the fisheries department, and the Indian Coast Guard. While the cause of the accident is yet to be confirmed, rough monsoon conditions are suspected to have contributed. *—PTI*

Rahul to protest 'votes theft' in City next week

BJP calls it a funny joke, says Gandhi is being misguided

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

- Rahul said the party figured out the modus operandi by studying a Constituency in State

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who recently claimed that his party has figured out the modus operandi of the "votes theft" by studying a Lok Sabha constituency in State, will participate in a protest in City on 4 or 5 August and submit a representation to the Election Commission officials here.

Amid the raging row over the revision of electoral rolls in Bihar, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, on 23 July, alleged that elections are being "stolen" .

"Gandhi has raised voice against irregularities in elections. He had said that such things had taken place in Karnataka too, so he is coming here to give representation to the Election Commission officials," State Home Minister G Parameshwara said.

"Party State President (DK Shivakumar) and Chief Minister (Siddaramaiah) are finalising the plan. As per the tentative plan, he (Gandhi) is likely to address party workers at Freedom Park, following which he is likely to meet election officials and submit a memorandum," he said.

Noting that there are directions from the High Court in 2022 against holding procession and protest in the City, Parameshwara said.... "there will not be any procession."

Shivakumar, seemed to want to push for a march. "Let's see. I have spoken to Police Commissioner and officials... there are court conditions. It will be discussed at the meeting tomorrow."

BJP State President BY Vijayendra called the whole issue "funny".

"If the BJP can manipulate and misuse the EC, then how did Congress come to power in Karnataka with 136 MLAs? How did the Congress win by-elections for three MLA seats?" Vijayendra asked. "I think Rahul Gandhi has been misguided in this issue.... It is a joke." *—PTI*

Rahul Gandhi *PHOTO: ANI*

IMD forecasts heavy rains, strong winds across State

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast widespread light to moderate rain across Karnataka over the next week, with strong surface winds expected to persist across several regions. Wind speeds may reach 50–60kmph in North Interior districts such as Belagavi, Bidar, Kalaburagi and Koppal, prompting the IMD to issue warnings to fishermen and port authorities in Karwar, Mangaluru, Panambur, and other coastal towns.

Coastal State — including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada — is expected to receive sustained rain and winds up to 40kmph until 5 August. South Interior Karnataka (SIK) districts such as Shivamogga, Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru and Bengaluru may see scattered showers with winds of 40–50kmph.

Despite the forecast, rainfall data up to 29 July reveals worrying trends: SIK continues to face a significant deficit. HAL Airport in City recorded a 29 per cent shortfall, while Bengaluru Urban saw a 42 per cent deficit. Mysuru (-99 per cent) Hassan (-208 per cent), and Chamarajanagar (-52 per cent) are among the worst hit.

North Interior Karnataka also remains parched, with Koppal reporting an 85 per cent deficit.

"While urban regions may benefit from reduced flooding, agriculture is severely impacted," said senior IMD scientist CS Patil. "The rainfall shortfall directly affects sowing and crop yields."

In City, the cooler spell continues, with 28's July maximum temperature dropping to 26.6°C — 1.4°C below normal. On 29 July, the maximum stood at 27°C, while the minimum was 19.3°C — 0.7°C below average. *—Salar News*

AFTER A PROMOTION

Govt mulls replacing D'sthala SIT Chief

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday said that the State government will decide if there is a need to replace senior IPS officer Pronab Mohanty, who is the SIT chief, set up to probe the allegations of "mass burials" in Dharmasthala, considering law and rules.

He was replying to a question by reporters regarding replacing Mohanty, who has found a place in the list of empanelment of Director General-rank officers to serve in the union government, released by the Centre.

"We will discuss if he (Mohanty) can continue to head the Special Investigation Team being there (in a new role at Centre) or should he be replaced. If law and rule permits that he can continue to head the SIT being there. We will continue him. If he needs to be replaced, the government will appoint an official of the same ranking," he said. "I will not make any comments on the SIT probe. After the probe is completed and we get the report, we can speak then. Until then I will not speak."

This comes after former State deputy superintendent of police Anupama Shenoy requested the removal of Mohanty, alleging his previous role as the Superintendent of Police could affect the fairness of the probe.

The SIT was consituted following claims about alleged mass murder, rape, and mass burials. *—PTI*

MEET THE 'HIGH COMMAND'?

Karnataka Road Transport Corporation Workers Union demanded a meeting with the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah so that they could address their various grievances, during their protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Wednesday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

LULU MALL BENGALURU TO SALUTE KARGIL HEROES FOR 2 MONTHS

Lulu Mall Bengaluru honoured the valour of India's armed forces with a stirring Kargil Vijay Diwas tribute on July 26, 2025, at its North Atrium. The event featured decorated war hero Col P. Rajnarayan of the 17 Garhwal Rifles, who led a daring assault during the 1999 Kargil War. His inspiring account of capturing Area Bumps under hostile conditions left the audience deeply moved and proud.

In a patriotic atmosphere filled with emotion, the Mall hosted citizens, veterans, and families to remember the supreme sacrifices of India's soldiers. The venue was adorned with evocative imagery, patriotic music, and a solemn moment of silence, creating a truly immersive and respectful experience. The tribute also featured cultural performances, poetry readings, and an interactive exhibit on Operation Vijay.

Col Rajnarayan's powerful message urged India's youth to uphold courage, integrity, and resilience—values that defined Kargil's bravehearts. Mr. Shereef K K, Regional Director, reaffirmed Lulu Mall's commitment to national pride and fostering civic consciousness through such events.

The public can visit the commemorative showcase for two months at Lulu Mall Rajajinagar.

About Lulu Mall Bengaluru: 150+ brands, 11-screen cinema, 30+ food outlets, 1700+ parking spaces—City's ultimate shopping and entertainment destination.

Contact: Vishal SS: vishalss@luluinida.com +91-9606451845

CM continues grievance redressal meeting with MLAs amid party 'rift'

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

In a bid to placate disgruntled legislators and address their grievances, State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah continued to hold one-on-one meetings with Congress MLAs.

The exercise, aimed at ironing out differences within the ruling party, comes in the wake of mounting discontent among some legislators who have expressed displeasure over the slow pace of development works in their constituencies.

Siddaramaiah met legislators from Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Vijayanagara and Ballari districts on Wednesday. According to sources, these interactions are likely to continue till Saturday.

Siddaramaiah on Tuesday held discussions with ministers and MLAs from Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Tumakuru, Kodagu, Hassan and Dakshina Kannada districts.

The CM also announced a special grant of Rs 50 crore for developmental works in the State.

Notably, Deputy Chief Minister and Karnataka Congress President DK Shivakumar was not included in the meetings, a decision that raised eyebrows in political circles. *—PTI*

Centre pledges 1.35L MT urea in 15 days: Bommai

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

BJP leader Basavaraj Bommai on Wednesday said Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister JP Nadda has assured that 1.35 lakh metric tonnes of urea required for Karnataka will be supplied within the next 10 to 15 days.

The Haveri MP said he met Nadda and discussed the ongoing fertiliser shortage in the State.

"The minister immediately held discussions with officials and assured that action would be taken to ensure supply of 1.35 lakh metric tonnes of urea to Karnataka," Bommai said.

He said instructions would be issued to companies like Coromandel and Madras Fertilisers and supply would begin immediately.

"Today alone, 16,000 metric tonnes are being dispatched. A daily supply of 15,000 to 20,000 metric tonnes will continue," he added.

The former CM claimed farmers across the state are not receiving urea on time, adding that the issue is long-standing.

This year, due to a favourable monsoon and pre-monsoon showers, there has been a significant increase in maize cultivation, with acreage rising by 1.5 per cent, he said.

"The agriculture department is aware of this. Normally, demand for urea starts in July and extends through August, but rains began in the third week of June this year, advancing the demand," he noted. *—PTI*

Dirty toilets, no drinking water plague Yadgir hospitals

YADGIR, 30 JULY

During a surprise inspection, the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights found several hostels and hospitals in Yadgir district to have non-functional drinking water units, unhygienic toilets and serving food improperly.

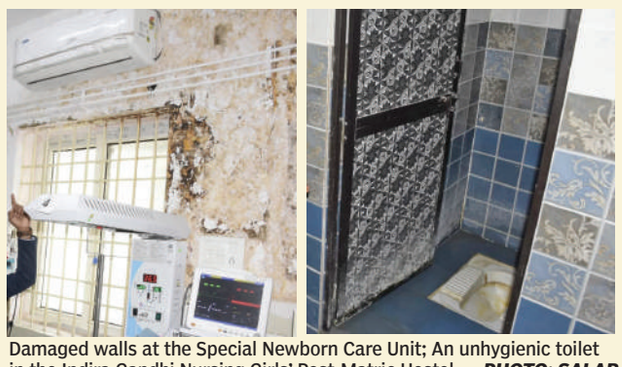
Shashidhar Kosambe, a member of the Commission, instructed the concerned departmental officials to take immediate action to take immediate action.

In the Indira Gandhi Nursing Girls' Post-Matric Hostel in Yadgir city, students said that the drinking water unit was non-functional, toilets were unhygienic, and meals were not being served properly. Upon inspection, Kosambe noted that there was a shortage of food supplies and hot water was not being adequately surprised. He directed the Backward Classes Welfare Department officer to issue a notice to the hostel warden.

In the district sports hostel under the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, students said they were not given bed sheets, mosquito nets or even tooth paste. They said leftover food was being served again at dinner.

Notably, the Child Helpline number helpline number sign board gave the number as 1099 instead of the correct 1098.

The Special Newborn Care Unit in the area had wall damage due to rainwater leakage. *—Salar News*



Damaged walls at the Special Newborn Care Unit; An unhygienic toilet in the Indira Gandhi Nursing Girls' Post-Matric Hostel *PHOTO: SALAR*

Cong split BBMP to keep it under its thumb: Ashoka

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

The Congress government has divided City to suit its electoral motives in the BBMP elections, and the BJP will fight against this, Opposition Leader R Ashoka said.

He said that the City has been arbitrarily split into five parts under the Greater Bengaluru Planning Act for political reasons. It will lead to disparities among the five civic bodies.

"Congress is certain to lose the BBMP elections," he said. "The division is an attempt to avoid defeat.

The Congress is "tearing Bengaluru apart", he said, noting that the proposed toll on projects like the tunnel road will make it inaccessible to the poor, especially when the City is grappling with issues like taxes, cess and e-kathas.

Meanwhile, State BJP leader BY Vijayendra claimed that there is a "vertical split" within the ruling Congress over the Chief Minister post and predicted "Diwali dhamaka".

"The Russia-Ukraine war may end, but here, a new war will surely begin," *—Salar News with agencies*

'ERODING DEMOCRACY'

B'luru Archbishop says detention of 2 nuns in Ch'garh illegal

BELAGAVI, 30 JULY

The Archdiocese of Bangalore strongly condemned the arrest and alleged assault of two Catholic Religious Sisters at Durg Railway Station, Chhattisgarh, on 25 July. The nuns were reportedly detained while accompanying three girls, all of whom travelling with written parental consent.

Archbishop Peter Machado, expressed "deep anguish and shock" at what he called a "grave injustice" and a "shameful disregard" to the Catholic Sisters.

What added to the concern, according to the Archbishop, was the late addition of charges under the Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Act, 1968—raising fears of legal manipulation driven by communal bias. He also criticised the law enforcement agencies for allegedly denying parents access to their daughters and for failing in their duty to act impartially.

The Archbishop has warned that if right-wing elements are allowed to act with impunity, it will erode the very foundations of India's democracy.

"In a nation that claims to empower girls through Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, the mistreatment of women from minority communities speaks volumes," he said. *—Salar News*

DyCM DK Shivakumar, AICC Secretaries Abhishek Dutt and Mansoor Ali Khan and others, at KPCC Office in City, on Wednesday *PHOTO: SALAR*

DKS CONFIRMS THAT MAHADEVAPURA WAS WHERE VOTE THEFT HAPPENED

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar appeared confirm that Mahadevapura Assembly segment was where voters names were allegedly added to voters list, backing Rahul Gandhi's claim of "vote theft"

"We have taken a case study, such things are there in other segments as well...names have been changed, different photos have been put in front of one's name," DKS said. *—PTI*

Modi to release Rs 20,500 crore for 9.7 cr farmers

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the 20th instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme on 2 August from Varanasi, transferring approximately Rs 20,500 crore to 9.7 crore farmers nationwide. Launched in 2019, the direct benefit transfer initiative has so far disbursed over Rs 3.69 lakh crore across 19 instalments. Under the scheme, eligible small and marginal farmers receive Rs 6,000 annually in three equal parts. To receive the 20th instalment, farmers must complete e-KYC, ensure their Aadhaar is linked to their bank account, and maintain accurate land records. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan chaired a review meeting to oversee the preparations. *—PTI*

Meghalaya's lone Congress MLA now joins NPP

SHILLONG, 30 JULY

Ronnie V Lyngdoh, Meghalaya's lone Congress MLA and opposition chief whip, has joined the ruling National People's Party (NPP), effectively leaving the Congress with no representation in the 60-member Assembly. Representing the Mylliem constituency, Lyngdoh submitted a merger letter to Speaker Thomas A Sangma, who approved it under the anti-defection law. This move follows the 2024 defection of three Congress MLAs Celestine Lyngdoh, Gabriel Wahlang, and Charles Marngar to the NPP, along with Saleng A Sangma's election to the Lok Sabha. The NPP, led by Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, now holds 32 seats. The Congress accused the NPP of "engineering defections" using corrupt money, likening the betrayal to Judas. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

CB-CID to probe Tamil Nadu honour killing case

CHENNAI, 30 JULY

A 27-year-old Dalit IT engineer, Kavin Selvaganesh, was brutally murdered in Tamil Nadu on 27 July in a suspected honour killing. The accused, Surjith, allegedly lured Kavin under the pretext of a discussion, then attacked and killed him with a sickle. Surjith, whose sister was reportedly in a relationship with the victim, has been arrested and charged under the IPC and SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. . His parents, both sub-inspectors, were named in the FIR and have been suspended. The case has been transferred to the CB-CID for a fair investigation. Political allies of the ruling DMK have demanded specific legislation to prevent honour killings in the state. *—PTI*

NCLT backs Jagan over transfer of Saraswati share

HYDERABAD, 30 JULY

The NCLT Hyderabad bench has ruled that the transfer of shares in Saraswati Power and Industries Pvt Ltd from former Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his wife Bharathi to his sister YS Sharmila and mother Vijayamma was never legally completed. Though Jagan had agreed to gift the shares "out of love and affection," the original share certificates were never delivered, rendering the transfer invalid. The tribunal ordered the company to reinstate Jagan, Bharathi, and Vijayamma as shareholders and inform the Registrar of Companies. Jagan later revoked the MoU amid a family rift. Sharmila unsuccessfully contested the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from Kadapa. The ruling stressed on formal procedures in share transfers. *—PTI*

3 terrorists shot in head: Amit Shah

Oppn MPs walk out of RS over PM's absence, call it 'insult to the House'

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

The Rajya Sabha witnessed sharp disruptions on Wednesday as Home Minister Amit Shah responded to the debate on Operation Sindoor, following the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack. Opposition MPs, led by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's presence in the House and walked out after the Chair declined their demand.

As Shah rose to speak, Opposition members shouted slogans and hooted, insisting the Prime Minister address the House over India's cross-border strikes. Responding firmly, Shah said, "PM Modi is very much in office. I am here to address your concerns."

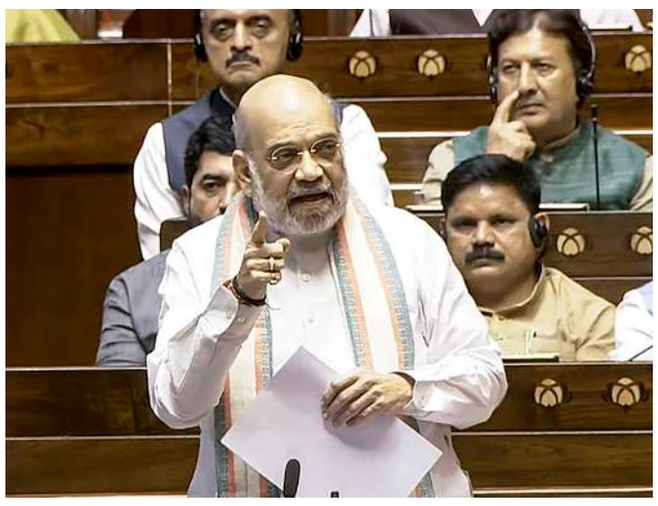
Detailing the outcome of Operation Mahadev, Shah said the three terrorists responsible for the Pahalgam massacre were "shot in their heads," exactly as many families of the victims had wished. He confirmed the terrorists' identities as members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, establishing Pakistan's involvement.

Shah lashed out at Congress, particularly P Chidambaram, for questioning the operation's legitimacy and demanding proof. He accused the Congress of prioritising vote-bank politics over national security, saying they were willing to side with Pakistan and terrorists to appease certain communities.

The Home Minister also rebuked Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan for questioning the name 'Operation Mahadev'. "When Shivaji Maharaj fought the Mughals, his war cry was 'Har Har Mahadev'. Army slogans based on religion are historic and symbolic, not communal," Shah said.

He also clarified that the operation was meticulously executed by the CRPF, Army, and J&K Police, who tracked the terrorists through difficult terrain, with food delivered by drones.

The session ended with the Opposition absent from the House, while Shah reiterated the government's resolve to fight terrorism with full force. *—PTI*



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks during a debate in the Rajya Sabha on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor, at the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

- As Shah rose to speak, Opposition members shouted slogans and hooted, insisting the Prime Minister address the House over India's cross-border strikes.

Oppn doubles down in Parl on arrest of nuns in Ch'garh

NEW DELHI/DURG, 30 JULY

The arrest of two Catholic nuns in Chhattisgarh on charges of human trafficking and forced religious conversion has sparked nationwide protests and political outrage, with Opposition leaders calling the case fabricated and communal in nature.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra led a protest in the Parliament complex alongside Kerala MPs, denouncing BJP for "atrocities on minorities" and demanding immediate release of nuns Preethi Merry and Vandana Francis. The two were arrested on 25 July at Durg railway station along with Sukaman Mandavi after a Bajrang Dal functionary accused them of forcibly converting & trafficking three tribal girls from Narayanpur.

However, Shashi Tharoor, was absent. Interestingly, he was part of a protest on the same issue on Tuesday. The absence sparked a buzz as it played out against backdrop of Tharoor's strained ties with Congress leaders over his public remarks after Pahalgam attack & Op Sindoor.

Congress MPs KC Venugopal, K Suresh, K Francis George, and Hibi Eden raised the issue in Lok Sabha, condemning the arrests as "false, disturbing and shocking".

Senior CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat, after visiting the nuns, called the arrests "unconstitutional" & a "targeted attack on Christians". *—PTI*

LoP in the Kerala Legislative Assembly VD Satheesan, Congress Committee Prez Sunny Joseph and party leader VM Sudheeran along with supporters at the 'Protest March to Raj Bhavan' in Thiruvananthapuram **PHOTO: PTI**

No jurisdiction to hear nuns' bail plea: court

DURG, 30 JULY

A sessions court in Chhattisgarh's Durg district on Wednesday ruled that it does not have the jurisdiction to hear the bail applications of two Catholic nuns arrested on charges of human trafficking and religious conversion.

The court disposed of the bail pleas of nuns Preethi Merry and Vandana Francis, stating that applications under Section 143 (human trafficking) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) must be heard by a special court.

Lawyer Rajkumar Tiwari confirmed the court's decision and said the accused may now need to approach a designated special court for further legal relief.

The nuns, both from Kerala, remain lodged in Durg Central Jail amid mounting political protests and nationwide demands for their release. *—PTI*

Dosti with US means little: Oppn

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Opposition parties slammed the government on Wednesday after Donald Trump imposed a 25-per cent tariff and penalties on Indian imports, and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's friendship with the US president meant little.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said Modi should take inspiration from former prime minister Indira Gandhi and stand up to the US president.

"President Trump has slapped a tariff of 25 per cent plus penalty……All that 'taarif' between him and 'Howdy Modi' has meant little," Ramesh said on X.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

Remember, while India is our friend, we have, over the years, done relatively little business with them because their Tariffs are far too high, among the highest in the World, and they have the most strenuous and obnoxious non-monetary Trade Barriers of any Country. Also, they have always bought a vast majority of their military equipment from Russia, and are Russia's largest buyer of ENERGY, along with China, at a time when everyone wants Russia to STOP THE KILLING IN UKRAINE — ALL THINGS NOT GOOD! INDIA WILL THEREFORE BE PAYING A TARIFF OF 25%, PLUS A PENALTY FOR THE ABOVE, STARTING ON AUGUST FIRST. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER. MAGA!

Ramesh said that Modi had abruptly stopped Op Sindoor on 10 May in the hope of getting a good trade deal with the US. But that deal had not materialised.

Sharing a video of Modi and Trump, Trinamool Congress's Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien said on X, "56 is less than 25! Now what will 56 inch say about the brutal 25 percent Trump tariff. Remember this...."

In the video Modi is heard saying, "We in India have connected well with President Trump." He also repeats the slogan "Abki baar Trump Sarkar".

Talking to reporters in the Parliament complex, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha said, "We are not very happy that it has happened under the rule of Prime Minister Modi. We want our government to accept the inadequacies, take everyone into confidence and say that this country will prevail as a strong entity."

CPI general secretary D Raja said this was a blatant assertion of arm-twisting India's foreign policy, yet the BJP remained silent. *—PTI*

OPERATION SHIVSHAKTI

2 terrorists killed as Army foils infiltration in Poonch

JAMMU, 30 JULY

Two suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were killed when army troops scuttled an infiltration attempt along the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

The latest encounter comes two days after security forces eliminated three hardcore terrorists, involved in the Pahalgam terror attack, in a forest in Srinagar. The army confirmed that two terrorists were neutralised in Poonch during Operation Shivshakti.

It said synergistic and synchronised intelligence inputs from own intelligence units and the J&K Police led to a successful operation. Earlier in another post, the army said suspected movement of two individuals was observed by Indian troops along the fence in general area of Poonch sector, leading to a gunfight.

Officials said troops on ambush duty, following information about possible attempt by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists to sneak into this side, saw the movement of infiltrating terrorists in Maldivalanarea of Degwar sector late Tuesday night. *—PTI*

Annamalai to not contest 2026 TN Assembly polls?

BENGALURU, 30 JULY

Former Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai is may not contest the 2026 Assembly polls in the state, according to sources from the party.

BJP sources said that the party may instead appoint him to a national-level post ahead of an organisational overhaul.

Although BJP's central leadership is yet to make a formal announcement, sources said discussions are underway to appoint Annamalai to a key national role in Delhi.

Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, had lauded Annamalai for accomplishing much for the saffron party during his tenure as the president of the BJP's state unit.

Shah earlier said on X that the BJP would leverage the latter's organisational skills in the party's national framework.

He praised the latter for strengthening the party's foothold in Tamil Nadu by taking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development policies to the grassroot level in the state.

Nainar Nagendran was appointed as Annamalai's successor after he stepped down.

Annamalai, a former IPS officer of the Karnataka cadre became the Tamil Nadu's BJP state president in 2021.

He had contested the 2024 Lok sabha polls from Coimbatore. However he was defeated by DMK's Ganapathy Rajkumar. *—Agencies*

Nitish more than doubles ASHA workers' incentive

PATNA, 30 JULY

PHOTO: ANI

Ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday announced that ASHA workers in the state will now get Rs 3,000 per month as an incentive, a substantial increase from the existing Rs 1,000. He also doubled the incentive of 'Mamta' health workers from Rs 300 per delivery.

In a post on X, Kumar said, "Since the formation of the government in November 2005, we have worked extensively to improve health services. Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and 'Mamta' workers have played a significant role in enhancing health services in rural areas."

ASHA workers will now be provided with "an incentive amount of Rs 3,000 instead of Rs 1,000", he said. 'Mamta' workers will now get an incentive amount of Rs 600 per delivery, up from the existing Rs 300, the CM added.

Reacting to CM's announcement, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said he had initiated the process of increasing the incentives for ASHA and Mamta workers during his 17-month tenure as the state health minister. *—PTI*

In a first, UNSC report mentions TRF after Pahalgam

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group, has found mention for the first time in a UN Security Council (UNSC) report for its role in the Pahalgam attack, a move expected to bolster India's diplomatic offensive against Pakistan-backed cross-border terrorism.

The report by the UNSC's Monitoring Team quoted one unnamed member state as saying that the 22 April terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir by the TRF could not have happened without the LeT's support and that there was a relationship between the two.

The development is significant as all decisions of the UNSC's 1267 Sanctions Committee, including reports, are adopted by consensus, people familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

The Pakistan foreign minister had boasted in the Pakistan National Assembly about forcing the removal of references to TRF in the UNSC press statement condemning the Pahalgam attack, they recalled.

The mention of TRF in the report is how the world views Pakistan's "lies and deceitful narrative", they said.

India backs Palestinian state

India said at a high-level UN conference that global efforts must now focus on achieving a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict through "purposeful dialogue and diplomacy".

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said on Tuesday that deliberations during the preparation for the UN High-Level International Conference on 'The Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution' confirm that the international community continues to believe there is no substitute for a two-state solution. *—PTI*

CASH-FOR-JOB SCAM

Balaji's trial requires a cricket stadium, says SC

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up the Tamil Nadu government for implicating more than 2,000 persons in cash-for-jobs scam cases involving ex-minister V Senthil Balaji and sought the details of all accused and witnesses.

Terming the trial in cases involving ex-minister as "rudderless ship", a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said that had there not been judicial intervention, the "reluctant state" wanted to give a decent burial of cases involving ex-minister Senthil Balaji in the cash-for-job scam case.

"With over 2,000 accused and 500 witnesses, it will be the most populated trial of India. A small courtroom of the trial court will not suffice and a cricket stadium will be needed to even mark the presence of the accused. Several Artificial Intelligence-generated accused will pop up to mark their presence," the bench told senior advocate Gopal Sankaranaryanan, appearing for Y Balaji, representing victims of the scam and opposing the decision for clubbing of the cases.

On a prayer for appointment of a special public prosecutor, the bench told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the state, that when a powerful minister and affluent people are accused in a case, there is a perception that a lone public prosecutor will not be able to do justice.

On Tuesday, the top court expressed displeasure over "attempts to delay" the trial in the case by implicating more than 2,000 people as accused in the alleged cash-for-jobs scam and described the attempt as a "complete fraud on the judicial system". *—PTI*

Senthil Balaji **PHOTO: ANI**

Joy Alukkas, Chairman of Joyalukkas Group, called the agreement a milestone in their international growth, praising Emirates NBD for its flexible and forward-looking approach **PHOTO: SALAR**

Joyalukkas gets 500M dirham working capital

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Jewellery retailer Joyalukkas on Wednesday said it has secured a working capital of 500 million UAE dirham (Rs 1,187.5 crore) through Dubai-based banking group Emirates NDB to support the expansion plans.

This milestone agreement supports Joyalukkas' long-term expansion plans across the UAE and key international markets, including the UK, the USA, Canada, and Australia.

"...the AED 500 million facility ensures timely access to inventory financing and liquidity to support peak trading periods and supplier commitments," the company said in a statement.The facility offers working capital on a revolving basis, enabling Joyalukkas to draw and repay funds as needed, thereby enhancing cost-efficiency and operational control, it said.

JoyAlukkas, the group's chairman said, "This deal sets a new benchmark in the jewellery industry. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

NIA court to give Malegaon blast verdict on 31 July

MUMBAI, 30 JULY

Nearly 17 years after a deadly blast in Malegaon killed six and injured over 100, a special NIA court will deliver its verdict on 31 July. Seven accused, including BJP MP Pragya Thakur and Lt Col Prasad Purohit, were charged. The 2008 explosion occurred near a mosque during Ramzan, just before Navratri, allegedly aimed at inciting communal unrest. The NIA argued the attack was part of a larger conspiracy to terrorise Muslims. The trial began in 2018 and concluded in April 2025. Thakur and Purohit claim fabricated evidence and political vendetta. Victims' lawyers say contradictory defences strengthen the prosecution's case. The court's ruling could have far-reaching implications for communal violence cases. *—PTI*

Andaman to get posh eco-tourism resorts at 5 spots

PORT BLAIR, 30 JULY

The Andaman and Nicobar administration plans to develop five-star eco-tourism resorts at five locations, including Aves Island, which will open to tourists for the first time. Projects are proposed at Neil Island, Megapode Resort (Port Blair), Aves Island, Long Island, and Smith Island. ANIIDCO has invited bids under a public-private partnership model. Aves Island, known for its coconut plantations and coral flat beds, is near Mayabunder and ideal for trekking and camping. A 2.75-hectare plot will be leased for the project, estimated at Rs 36 crore with 50 rooms. Larger resorts are planned at Lalaji Bay, Neil Island and Smith Island. The initiative aims to promote sustainable tourism. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Assam actor kills student in hit-and-run, held

ASSAM, 30 JULY

Assamese actor Nandini Kashyap was arrested in Guwahati on Wednesday morning, days after her vehicle allegedly ran over 21-year-old student Samiul Haque in a hit-and-run incident. The accident occurred around 3am on 25 July in the Dakhingaon area. CCTV footage shows Haque, a student at Nalbari Polytechnic, being struck by a Bolero, with Kashyap reportedly fleeing the scene. Haque succumbed to severe head injuries and multiple fractures. His family claims the actor promised to cover medical costs but never followed through. Haque's friends tracked the vehicle and confronted her. *—PTI*

No compensation for wife of Indian killed in Niger

BOKARO, 30 JULY

Yashoda Devi, whose husband was killed in a terrorist attack in Niger, is struggling to secure the insurance claim and adequate compensation following his death in a foreign country. Ganesh Karmali, 39, a resident of Gomia block in Jharkhand's Bokaro district, was killed in a crossfire between police and terrorists in the Dosso region of the West African nation on 15 July. His body was brought back home on Sunday evening. Devi, mother of three children, said the company where he was working paid only Rs 10 lakh as compensation to the family, which she termed inadequate. They did not receive the insurance coverage of Rs 40 lakh. *—PTI*

Are you Indian: Hindutva mob heckles Kargil veteran's kin

Mob of 80, including cops, call the Muslim family B'deshis

PUNE, 30 JULY

The family members of a Kargil war veteran have alleged that around 80 persons affiliated to a Hindutva outfit barged into their house in Pune and demanded a proof of their Indian citizenship, accusing them of being Bangladeshis.

Irshad Shaikh, 48, said his elder brother Hakimuddin Shaikh, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh, served in the Indian Army as havildar and took part in the Kargil war.

On 26 July around 80 people barged into Irahad's home in the city's Chandannagar area and started demanding Aadhaar cards of the family members. They termed the family's documents as fake.

When Irshad tried to reason with them, they hurled abuses and accused them of being Bangladeshis.

Chanting 'Jai Shree Ram', the Hindutva activists forced the family to come to the police station. Two individuals accompanying them identified themselves as policemen.

In the police station, a police official took their documents and were asked to return the next day with the warning that they would be declared Bangladeshis if they didn't.

The next day the police asked them not to file any complaint against the Hindutva activists, Irshad, who works in the transport sector, said.

Irshad approached social activist Rahul Dambale, who helped them contact a senior police officer, who assured action in the matter.

Hakimuddin said, "What happened with my family was wrong, and if needed, I will speak to the police and seek an explanation," he said.

However, the police said that some police personnel had visited Irshad's home to verify their documents as part of a drive against illegal Bangladeshi immigrants.

Meanwhile, National Conference for Minority president Dambale said they had sought registration of an FIR in this connection. *—PTI*

On 26 July, around 80 people barged into the veteran's brother Irahad Shaikh's home and demanded for their Aadhaar cards **PHOTO: ANI**

- Hakimuddin Shaikh, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh, served in the Indian Army as havildar and took part in the Kargil war

SAVING FORESTS OR RUINING LIVES?

Authorities conduct an eviction drive to clear 1,500 ha of encroached forest land in Assam's Goalpara on Tuesday. The exercise will displace around 1,500 families, mostly from the Muslim community **PHOTO: PTI**

Another Bihar dog files for residence certificate

NAWADA, 30 JULY

In a bizarre repeat of Bihar's recent digital mischief, a dog named "Dogesh Babu" applied for a residence certificate in Nawada district.

The application, dated 29 July, included a dog's photo and listed "Dogesh ke Papa" and "Dogesh ki Mummy" as parents.

District Magistrate Ravi Prakash exposed the prank on social media, confirming an FIR has been lodged.

This marks the third such case in a week, following fake applications in the names of "Dog Babu" in rural Patna and "Sonalika Tractor" in East Champaran. *—PTI*

IN-HOUSE PANEL REPORT

SC holds verdict on Justice Varma's appeal

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

PHOTO: ANI

"Your conduct does not inspire confidence. You should have come earlier", the Supreme Court told Justice Yashwant Varma on Wednesday, reserving its order on his plea challenging the in-house inquiry and the Chief Justice of India's (CJI) recommendation for his removal in the cash discovery row.

Appearing for Justice Varma, advocate Kapil Sibal argued that Articles 124 and 218 lay down a complete process for a judge's removal, and any extra-constitutional in-house mechanism falls outside this framework. He contended that the in-house inquiry lacks statutory safeguards under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, such as cross-examination and evidentiary standards, and that the CJI's recommendation based on it was "non-est" and unconstitutional.

Sibal warned that such a removal process sets a dangerous precedent and interferes with Parliament's domain, as recommendations from the CJI carry significant influence.

Justice Datta countered that the in-house procedure had been reaffirmed in three judgments and has judicial backing.

The bench questioned the delay in approaching the Court, stating, "The points you are raising are major, but could have been raised before."

Responding to Sibal's point on reputational damage from a leaked tape, the bench said that public disclosure does not invalidate the process. Sibal maintained that he could not challenge the committee in Parliament.

The Court also reserved its decision on a separate plea by advocate Mathews J Nedumpara seeking an FIR against Justice Varma, questioning whether he had even approached the police before seeking judicial intervention. *—PTI*

Vedas protect those who nurture it: Madras HC

CHENNAI, 30 JULY

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Justice GR Swaminathan of the Madras High Court recalled how a Vedic scholar friend was wrongly jailed for 18 months in a fatal road accident case. The scholar had taken the blame for his sister, who fled abroad. No witness identified him, and he was acquitted on appeal.

The judge reflected, "When we protect the Vedas, the Vedas protect us," calling it a turning point in his spiritual perspective. *—PTI*

1 YR OF WAYANAD TRAGEDY

Survivors remember Kerala landslide victims

WAYANAD, 30 JULY

PHOTO: ANI

A heavy silence hung over the mist-covered hills of the Mundakkai-Chooralmala region Kerala's Wayanad on Wednesday, as hundreds gathered to mark the first anniversary of the devastating landslide that claimed more than 250 lives last year.

Many visitors remained silent, while others wept, remembering loved ones who were buried alive in the landslides.

Hundreds thronged 'hridaya bhoomi', the burial site of 264 victims located in Meppadi to pay their respects.

"This is a day we never want to remember," said Manoj, who lost 26 members of his extended family in the disaster.

Prashanthan, another survivor, said his immediate family narrowly escaped, but his brother and his brother's family were swept away.

DNA testing helped identify 130 victims. Though families were offered the option of taking the bodies for individual religious rites and burial elsewhere, many declined.

A memorial meeting along with an all-faith prayer was held at Meppadi. *—PTI*

- Many visitors remained silent, while others wept, remembering loved ones who were buried alive in the landslides
- Hundreds thronged 'hridaya bhoomi', the burial site of 264 victims located in Meppadi to pay their respects

1/2kg hairball removed from girl's stomach

AMRAVATI, 30 JULY

Nearly half a kilogram of hairball has been removed from the stomach of a 10-year-old girl through surgery in Maharashtra's Amravati city after she complained of digestion related issues, doctors have said.

After her medical examination and counselling, the girl informed doctors that she had the habit of eating hair for a long time, paediatric surgeon Dr Usha Gajbhiye said on Tuesday.

The girl was brought to the hospital 20 days back with complaints of vomiting, loss of appetite and weight loss problems since the last five to six months, she said.

Medical examination revealed the hair had gathered into a ball in her stomach, the doctor said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: AI

₹500cr medical supply 'scam': ED holds raids in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR/HYDERABAD, 30 JULY

The ED on Wednesday raided multiple locations in Chhattisgarh in money laundering investigation into an over Rs 500 crore medical supply scam.

Premises linked to some government officials, medical suppliers and agents apart from some "middlemen" are being raided in Raipur, Durg and adjoining places.

The ED probe stemmed from an Anti-Corruption Bureau/ Economic Offences Wing chargesheet filed against six persons for alleged irregularities in purchase of medical equipment and reagents in 2023 leading to a loss of Rs 550 crore to the state exchequer.

ED RAIDS IN T'GANA

On Wednesday, the ED also conducted searches at multiple locations in Hyderabad as part of a money laundering investigation into a sheep rearing and distribution "scam" involving crores of rupees, sources said.

- On Wednesday, the ED also conducted searches at multiple locations in Hyderabad as part of a money laundering investigation into a sheep rearing and distribution "scam" involving crores of rupees, sources said

Eight locations related to the beneficiaries and alleged middlemen involved in the scam apart from that of G Kalyan, OSD to former BRS minister Talasani Srinivasa Yadav, were searched.

ED found that though the proceeds of crime stated in the FIRs was only Rs 2.1 crore, a CAG report has pegged the loss to the state government into crores of rupees.

The CAG audit report for period ended March-2021 found several "irregularities" in the implementation of the flagship Sheep Rearing Development Scheme. *—PTI*

ED flags ₹131-crore sand mining 'scam' in Bihar

NEW DELHI/PATNA, 30 JULY

The ED has written to the Bihar government flagging an alleged over Rs 131 crore worth sand mining scam in Banka district of the state that has potential links to certain politicians and their associates, official sources said.

The agency's communication came in the backdrop of a 2023 'Lok Adalat', during which the alleged criminal offence was "compounded" and the accused were let off with a monetary penalty, the sources said.

The case began with the Banka police filing as many as seven criminal FIRs between 2017 and 2018 against a company named Mahadev Enclave and its promoters to probe the alleged illegal sand mining in the district. The company was the sole licence holder in the district to excavate sand from 28 river banks between 2015 and 2021. *—PTI*

RESHAPING BOUNDARIES

1st Harappan settlement found in Thar

JAIPUR, 30 JULY

Researchers have unearthed the first confirmed Harappan settlement in Rajasthan's arid western region, revealing vital clues that will reshape the known boundaries of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation.

This is being seen as a vital link between known Harappan sites in northern Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The discovery was made at Raatadi Ri Dheri in the Jaisalmer district, a remote desert location around 70 km from Pakistan's Sandhanawala, where Harappan remnants had previously been identified.

The site was excavated by archaeologist Pankaj Jagani and the findings have been subsequently validated by experts from the University of Rajasthan and Rajasthan Vidyapeeth in Udaipur.

The artefacts recovered include classic Harappan material culture, red ware pottery, perforated jars, terracotta cakes, chert blades, clay and shell bangles, a kiln with a central column, wedge-shaped bricks and foundations consistent with the Harappan architecture.

Experts say the site's design elements, like a kiln similar to those found at Kalibangan and Mohenjodaro, suggest a complex socio-economic system that extended well into an uninhabitable desert.

These features point to a once-thriving hinterland that supported trade and artisanal production in the Indus network. Tamegh Panwar, a senior historian from Rajasthan's tourism and cultural department said the site reflected the dynamics of Harappan rural settlements and their role in connecting urban centres via trade and resource integration.

A detailed research paper by Kharkwal and Jagani was submitted to an international journal. If accepted, the site may gain global recognition as a keystone in Harappan studies. *—PTI*

The findings have been validated by experts from the University of Rajasthan and Rajasthan Vidyapeeth in Udaipur **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Assam varsity develops device to detect TB

GUWAHATI, 30 JULY

Researchers at Tezpur University in Assam have developed a portable, smartphone-compatible device to detect tuberculosis (TB) without using chemicals or dyes.

Led by Professor Pabitra Nath from the Department of Physics, the device relies on the natural autofluorescence of Mycobacterium tuberculosis cells, enhanced by a built-in heating system. Weighing under 300 grams and costing less than Rs 25,000, it is ideal for rural and low-resource settings.

Current TB screening methods, such as LED fluorescence microscopy, require expensive equipment and chemical stains, making them less practical outside laboratory environments.

PHOTO: X/ TEZPUR UNIVERSITY

The Tezpur device offers a cost-effective alternative, needing no trained technicians or lab infrastructure. A patent has been filed, and findings are published in Biosensors and Bioelectronics. This innovation could significantly support India's TB elimination efforts. *—PTI*

14 SECONDS AND DOWN

The first Australian-made rocket, Eris, which was to reach orbit from the country's soil, crashed after 14 seconds of flight on Wednesday. The rocket, launched by Gilmour Space Technologies, was the first Australian-designed and manufactured orbital launch vehicle to lift off from the country. It was designed to carry small satellites to orbit and launched on Wednesday morning in a test flight from a spaceport near the small town of Bowen in the north of Queensland state. In videos published by Australian news outlets, the 23m rocket appeared to clear the launch tower and hover in the air before falling out of sight

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Deported Bengali migrants face endless uncertainty

The families were deported following orders from the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), Delhi police said

PHOTO: PTI

Sixty-something Bhodu Sheikh sat on the porch of his ramshackle hut in Dorjee Para, a settlement tucked away in one corner of Paikar village in the Muslim-majority Murarai assembly constituency of West Bengal's Birbhum district, with a blank look in his eyes.

More than the rickety body that shrank further during the cough bouts from his debilitating asthma, Bhodu's overt signs of resignation to fate seemed expedited by his total ignorance of the current whereabouts of his daughter, Sonali, and five-year-old grandson Sabir, who along with his son-in law, Danesh, were picked up by Delhi Police from the Bengali Basti in Sector 26, Rohini, last month and pushed to Bangladesh.

They were deported following orders from the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), Delhi police had said.

The family, Bhodu said, lived in Delhi for nearly 25 years, where Danesh worked as a ragpicker and waste collector. They were targeted, among hundreds of other basti dwellers, because they spoke Bangla and were most vulnerable to being branded as 'Bangladeshis', he alleged.

"I was born in this village," Bhodu claimed, "and so was my daughter. My grandson was born in Delhi".

Sonali's brother, Suraj Sheikh, alleged that they paid a lawyer Rs 30,000 after he promised to get his sister and her family released, only to learn later that they had been sent to Bangladesh. "We came home for the Qurbani Eid festival, but now we are too frightened to go back," Suraj's wife, Seema, chipped in.

To support his claim that his sister is now in some unknown location in Bangladesh, Suraj played a Facebook video, the authenticity of which PTI could not independently verify, where Sonali and her family, along with three others, and plead with folded hands for help.

About a kilometre away in Fakirpara in Paikar, a fledgling rural hamlet that comes alive every Tuesday on account of a cattle trading market that sits there, 30-year-old Amir Khan had a similar story to share.

Amir alleged that his sister, Sweety Bibi and her two sons, Qurban Sheikh, 16 and Imam Dewan, 6, were detained by Delhi Police from the same neighbourhood as Sonali and then deported to Bangladesh on 27 June.

"My sister worked as a domestic help in that area. She was living in Delhi since she was 12 and wasn't at home when police raided, so they took her elder son instead. When she reached the police station looking for Qurban, they arrested her as well. She furnished Aadhaar cards as proof of their permanent address in Birbhum, which the police dismissed," Amir said.

"She had Qurban's birth certificate at home but she couldn't produce it since a devastating fire at the shanty barely days before the raids began had destroyed documents. We, however, have Imam's document here," Amir said, holding up the state health department certificate, which states that Imam was born at the Murarai rural hospital on 1 January, 2020.

In the purported Facebook video, Sweety alleged that the police beat them up and coerced them into medical examinations and biometric tests before transporting them to Bangladesh.

"We haven't heard from them for nearly a month now. We have no idea where they are and how they are living through this in an unknown land," said Mahida Bibi, Sweety's mother, her voice trembling.

She claimed Sweety was born at the very house where she stood that once belonged to her grandmother.

"We will fight against this till the very end, both politically and legally," said Samirul Islam, TMC Rajya Sabha MP and a local from Murarai, while marching with his party supremo Mamata Banerjee in her 'Bhasha Andolan' protest rally in Bolpur against alleged 'linguistic terror' unleashed on migrant Bengalis by the saffron camp.

"Anyone in the BJP who can actually read them will understand that these women are far more Indian than the loudmouth BJP touts slandering them," he wrote.

The IIT, Delhi postgraduate informed PTI that he awaited results of the legal battles on the issue pending before the high courts of Calcutta and Delhi.

"We will move the Supreme Court, if required," he said.

Islam maintained that not just Muslims, but migrant backward class Hindus, like the Namashudra Matuas and Rajbanshis, are also being subjected to similar harassments of detention and deportation.

In the Jharkhand bordering village of Kahinagar, Ataul Sheikh, 16 and his neighbour, Marjan, 17, narrated their ordeal of being held at an Odisha government detention camp earlier this month.

"We had gone to Jharsuguda to work as masons in a construction project. On 8 July, police came knocking on our doors at 1am. We were first taken to the local police station and then moved to a room at a local college hostel where I was confined for four days," said Ataul, adding that his brother Satabul, too, was held. Marjan, who was detained for two additional days, claimed he saw some 250 migrant workers, all Bengali-speaking, locked up in the camp.

"Do only Bangladeshis speak Bengali? Doesn't a significant number of Indians speak that language?" asked Chandni Bibi, Marjan's sister-in law. "By that logic, every Bengali-speaking citizen in Kolkata should also be arrested. It seems we must learn to speak in English now," she quipped.

—PTI

SALAR ساڈا

Here's a glance at some of the biggest earthquakes

One of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded struck Russia's Far East early Wednesday, resulting in small tsunami waves in Japan and Alaska and calls for people around the Pacific to be on alert or move to higher ground.

The powerful 8.8 magnitude temblor set off a series of warnings in Hawaii, North and Central America and Pacific islands south toward New Zealand, with officials warning that the potential tsunami danger may last for more than a day.

Here's a glance at some of the biggest recorded earthquakes as of 5 June, 2025, according to the US Geological Survey.

Biobío, Chile
A 9.5 magnitude earthquake struck in a central region of Chile in 1960. Known as the Valdivia earthquake or Great Chilean earthquake, the largest ever recorded temblor resulted in more than 1,600 deaths in the country and beyond, most of which were caused by resulting large tsunami. Thousands of people were injured.

Alaska
In 1964, a 9.2 magnitude earthquake jolted the Alaska's Prince William Sound, lasting for almost 5 minutes. More than 130 people were killed in the largest recorded earthquake in the US and subsequent tsunami. There were huge landslides and towering waves that caused severe flooding. The event was followed by thousands of aftershocks for weeks after initial quake.

Sumatra, Indonesia
A 9.1 magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami devastated Southeast and South Asia and East Africa in 2004, killing 230,000 people. Indonesia alone recorded more than 167,000 deaths as entire communities were wiped out.

Tohoku, Japan
A magnitude 9.1 earthquake struck off the coast of north-eastern Japan in 2011, triggering a towering tsunami that smashed into the Fukushima nuclear plant. It knocked out power and cooling systems and triggered meltdowns in three reactors. More than 18,000 people were killed in the quake and tsunami, some of whom have never been recovered.

Kamchatka, Russia
In 1952, a magnitude 9.0 quake caused significant damage but no reported deaths despite a tsunami that hit Hawaii with 9.1m waves.

Biobío, Chile
A massive 8.8 magnitude earthquake hit central Chile in 2010, shaking the capital for a minute and half and setting off a tsunami. More than 500 people were killed in the disaster.

Esmeraldas, Ecuador
In 1906, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami killed about 1,500 people. Its effects were felt for miles along the Central American coast and as far as San Francisco and Japan.

Alaska
In 1965, a magnitude 8.7 quake struck Alaska's Rat Islands, causing an 11m high tsunami. There was some relatively minor damage, including cracks in buildings and an asphalt runway.

Tibet
At least 780 people were killed when a magnitude 8.6 earthquake struck in 1950. Dozens of villages were destroyed, including at least one that slid into a river. There were also major landslides that jammed the Subansiri River in India. When the water eventually broke through, it resulted in a deadly 7-metre wave.

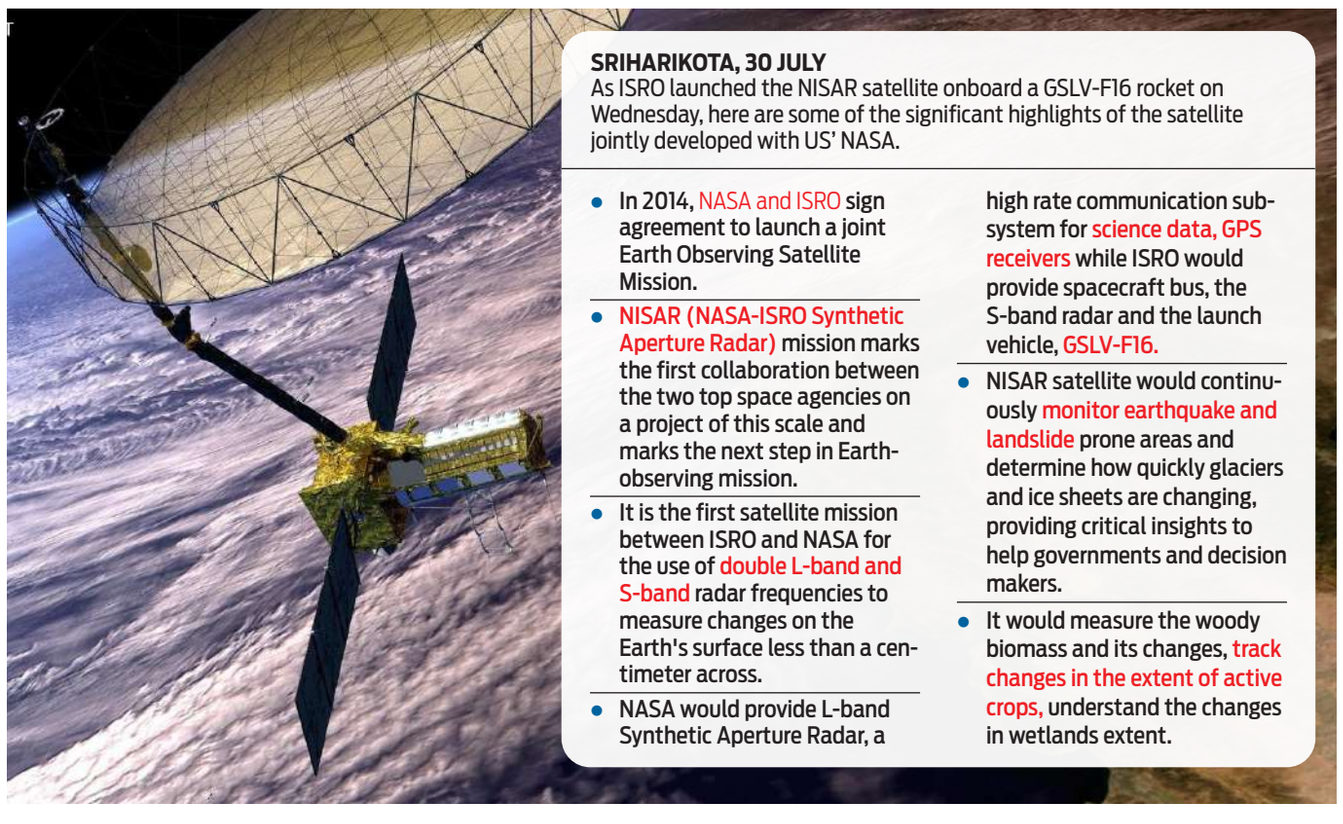
Sumatra, Indonesia
In 2012, a powerful 8.6 magnitude earthquake struck off the west coast of northern Sumatra in Indonesia. Though the quake caused little damage, it increased pressure on a fault that was the source of the devastating 2004 tsunami. *—PTI*

Russia's far east saw one of the biggest earthquakes on early Wednesday resulting in small tsunami waves in Japan and Alaska

PHOTO: BBC

JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Significant features of ISRO-NASA made NISAR satellite

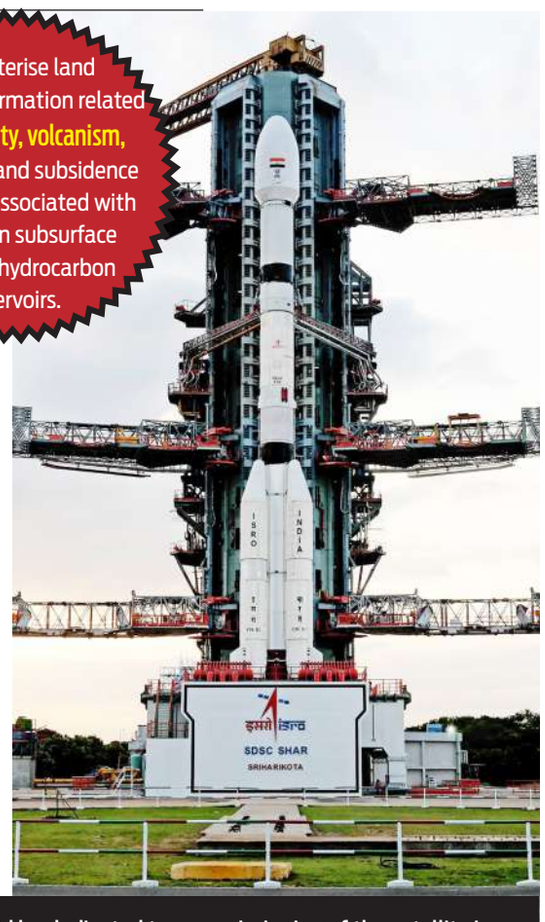


SRIHARIKOTA, 30 JULY
As ISRO launched the NISAR satellite onboard a GSLV-F16 rocket on Wednesday, here are some of the significant highlights of the satellite jointly developed with US' NASA.

- In 2014, NASA and ISRO sign agreement to launch a joint Earth Observing Satellite Mission.
- NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) mission marks the first collaboration between the two top space agencies on a project of this scale and marks the next step in Earth-observing mission.
- It is the first satellite mission between ISRO and NASA for the use of double L-band and S-band radar frequencies to measure changes on the Earth's surface less than a centimeter across.
- NASA would provide L-band Synthetic Aperture Radar, a high rate communication subsystem for science data, GPS receivers while ISRO would provide spacecraft bus, the S-band radar and the launch vehicle, GSLV-F16.
- NISAR satellite would continuously monitor earthquake and landslide prone areas and determine how quickly glaciers and ice sheets are changing, providing critical insights to help governments and decision makers.
- It would measure the woody biomass and its changes, track changes in the extent of active crops, understand the changes in wetlands extent.

Characterise land surface deformation related to seismicity, volcanism, landslides, and subsidence and uplift associated with changes in subsurface aquifers, hydrocarbon reservoirs.

- Map Greenland's & Antarctica's ice sheets, dynamics of sea ice and mountain glaciers.
- It would generate more data on a daily basis than other Earth satellite missions.
- GSLV-F16 becomes the first launch vehicle for ISRO to launch an earth observation satellite in a Sun-synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO).
- The GSLV-F16/NISAR is the 102nd mission from Sriharikota.



- The first 90 days after the launch would be dedicated to commissioning of the satellite in order to prepare the observatory for science operations.

FDA vaccine chief exits after brief tenure

WASHINGTON, 30 JULY

The Food and Drug Administration's polarising vaccine chief is leaving the agency after a brief tenure that drew the ire of biotech companies, patient groups and conservative allies of President Donald Trump. Indian-origin Dr Vinay Prasad "did not want to be a distraction" and was stepping down from his role "to spend more time with his family," a Department of Health and Human Services spokesperson said on Tuesday. Prasad became a target of conservative activists, including Laura Loomer. Under his direction, shipments of the therapy were briefly halted after a series of patient deaths, then resumed on Monday following vocal pushback from families of boys with the fatal muscle-wasting disorder. *—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

4 dead in Angola's fuel price protests, hundreds held

CAPE TOWN, 30 JULY

Four people have been killed and more than 500 arrested during two days of protests in Luanda, the capital of Angola, sparked by a rise in fuel prices, police said Tuesday. The protests erupted Monday over the government's decision earlier this month to raise the price of diesel by more than 30 per cent which resulted in large price hikes by minibus taxis that are the preferred method of transport for many Angolans. A police statement said hundreds of arrests were made in connection with rioting, vandalism and looting of shops. Cars and buses were damaged and roads were blocked. Four people were killed in the unrest. The Human Rights Watch accused the police of excessive force during similar protests last month in a peaceful protest. *—PTI*

Indian national convicted in S'pore for job fraud

SINGAPORE, 30 JULY

A 20-year-old Indian national has been charged with cheating and using forged documents to deceive a domestic worker into paying over SGD 2,000 for fake job offers for her relatives, The Straits Times reported. Charanjeet Singh was sentenced to 13 weeks in jail by a Singapore court on Tuesday on account of cheating and using forged documents, while three other charges were taken into consideration during sentencing. The court was told that Singh met the 29-year-old Indian domestic worker in October 2024 and claiming that he could secure jobs in Singapore for her relatives, he sought Rs 2.5 lakh per applicant. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Chile hands luxury watches stolen from Keanu to FBI

SANTIAGO, 30 JULY

Chilean authorities said Tuesday they turned six valuable watches stolen from Canadian actor Keanu Reeves over to the FBI, months after recovering them in a police raid. Chilean prosecutors told reporters that Reeves had identified the watches as those stolen from his Los Angeles home during a string of high-profile burglaries in December 2023. The watches turned up in Santiago, Chile's capital, when police uncovered stolen cars, iPhones, luxury watches and designer purses. That operation coincided with another Chilean investigation, coordinated with the FBI, into South America-based crime groups. *—PTI*

Thousands evacuated across globe after massive quake

No damage reported to Japan's major nuclear facilities

TOKYO, 30 JULY

Thousands of people were forced to evacuated after one of the strongest earthquakes ever recorded struck off Russia early Wednesday, sending tsunami waves into Japan, Hawaii, Chile and the West Coast.

Much of the North American West Coast, spanning California, Oregon, Washington state, and the Canadian province of British Columbia, were under a tsunami advisory. Initially, Hawaiian authorities feared the worst but later lifted evacuation orders on the Big Island and Oahu, the most populated island, although it was still under a tsunami advisory.

An advisory means there is the potential for strong currents and dangerous waves, as well as flooding on beaches or in harbours.

However, Chile upgraded its tsunami warning to the highest level early Wednesday for most of its lengthy Pacific coast following a powerful earthquake. Chile's national emergency service said it was evacuating hundreds of people from coastal areas.

The Education Ministry cancelled classes along much of the coast.

Japanese nuclear power plants reported no abnormalities.

The operator of the Fukushima Daiichi plant damaged by the 2011 tsunami said about 4,000 workers are taking shelter on higher ground at the plant complex while monitoring remotely to ensure safety.

Thankfully, no abnormalities in operations at Japan's nuclear plants were reported at the time of publishing.

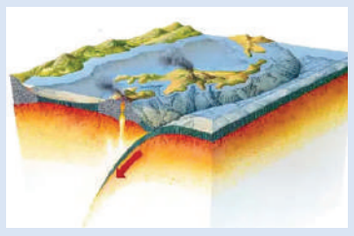
OPRAH'S PRIVATE ROAD

Oprah Winfrey opened her private road in Hawaii's Maui to help residents evacuate.

"As soon as we heard the tsunami warnings, we contacted local law enforcement and FEMA to ensure the road was opened," a spokesperson for the 71-year-old television personality told CNN.

Oprah had previously been accused of being indifferent to public needs during major catastrophes. *—PTI*

A notice issued at 5.30pm IST. The red and green marks are where the earthquake struck, purple indicates threat, orange advisory, yellow watch and red warning **PHOTO: NOAA**



HOW THE SINKING PLATES CAUSED THE EARTHQUAKES

Just off Kamchatka Peninsula's coast, the Pacific plate is moving northwest and coming into contact with another, smaller plate - the Okhotsk microplate. The Pacific plate is oceanic, which means it has dense rocks and wants to sink beneath the microplate. As it sinks towards the centre of the earth, it heats and begins to melt.

However, the tectonic plates often get stuck as they move past each other and the overriding plate is dragged downwards.

This friction can then suddenly be released causing the plates to rebound resulting in a megathrust earthquake. The largest earthquakes in history were all megathrust earthquakes.

8-DECADES OF CONFLICT

UN backs two-state solution to Gaza

UNITED NATIONS/ WASHINGTON, 30 JULY

High-level representatives at a UN conference urged Israel to commit to a Palestinian state and gave "unwavering support" to a two-state solution, signalling widespread international determination to end one of the world's longest conflicts. This come as Israeli killed at least 46 Palestinians overnight into Wednesday morning in Gaza, most of them among crowds seeking food.

The "New York Declaration" sets out a phased plan to end the nearly eight-decade conflict and the ongoing war in Gaza. The plan would culminate with an independent, demilitarised Palestine living side by side peacefully with Israel, and the nation's eventual integration into the wider Mideast region. The declaration's plan says conference co-chairs France and Saudi Arabia, the European Union and Arab League, and 15 countries that led the working groups agreed "to take collective action to end the war."

The declaration also condemns "the attacks committed by Hamas against civilians" on 7 October, 2023. This is the first time that Arab nations condemned Hamas.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer had announced that Britain would recognise the state of Palestine ahead of September's high-level meeting but would refrain if Israel agrees to a ceasefire in the next eight weeks.

TRUMP ANNOUNCES NEW AID PLAN

Aboard the Air Force One, US President Donald Trump said that the US will partner with Israel to run new food centres in Gaza to address the humanitarian crisis, but offered few additional details about how it would differ from existing system. Israel would preside over the new food centres "to make sure the distribution is proper," he said.

"We're going to be dealing with Israel, and we think they can do a good job of it," he added. *—PTI*

The plan would culminate with an independent, demilitarised Palestine living side by side peacefully with Israel **PHOTO: UN**

A videograb of Pakistani Army personnel opening fire at protesters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tirah Valley **PHOTO: X @FAZALURREHMANAF**

Pak army firing kills 7 Pashtun protesters

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, 30 JULY

The Pakistan Army opened fire on Pashtun protesters in Tirah Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, last Sunday, resulting in the deaths of seven Pashtuns and injuries to over twenty others.

The protesters had assembled in Tirah Valley to demonstrate against the death of a child killed by mortar fire from Pakistani forces. In retaliation, the soldiers began to shoot indiscriminately at the unarmed Pashtun demonstrators.

As reported by Dawn, the protesters, who were opposing counter-terrorism operations in the region, were shot at in the Mohmand Ghoz area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tirah Valley, according to a provincial government official.

Sohail Afridi, the Special Assistant for KP Communications and Works, mentioned an incident that had occurred a day earlier, when a mortar shell struck a house, resulting in the death of a young girl, which led the residents to stage a protest outside the Frontier Corps (FC) compound, as reported by Dawn."Frustrated locals gathered at the compound's gates, and shots were fired when the crowd approached the area," he stated. He confirmed there were reports of deaths and injuries as a result of this incident. *—ANI*

Attack on base in Burkina Faso kills 50 soldiers

LAGOS, 30 JULY

An attack by an armed group on a military base in northern Burkina Faso has left about 50 soldiers dead, according to accounts by a community leader and a resident.

The Monday attack was reportedly carried out by the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin group, or JNIM. The group attack base in Dargo in Boulsa province in the northern region of the landlocked West African nation.

The two sources, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they feared repercussions from the military, said about 100 militants participated in the attack, and that the gunmen burned and looted the base after the killings.

JNIM, one of several armed groups conducting attacks across West Africa, has been blamed for hundreds of civilian and military deaths. Burkina Faso is witnessing a surge in attacks by armed groups who are in control of most of the country, especially outside of the capital.

The deteriorating security situation has led to political shifts in the country and served as the pretext for back-to-back coups.

Terrorist attacks have long been a thorn in leader Ibrahim Traore's foot. *—PTI*

Epstein stole young women from Mar-a-Lago spa, says Trump

WASHINGTON, 30 JULY

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that Jeffrey Epstein "stole" young women who worked for the spa at Mar-a-Lago. One of the women, he said, was Virginia Giuffre, who was among Epstein's most well-known sex trafficking accusers.

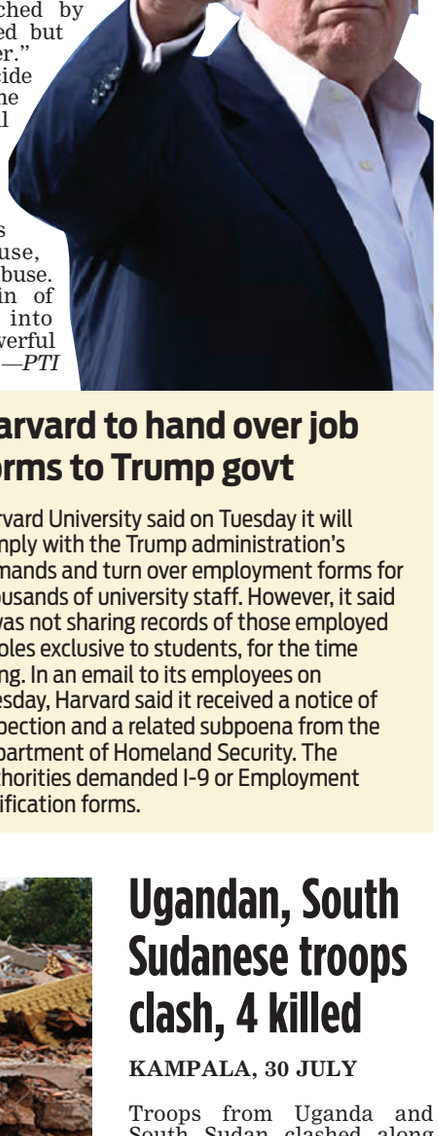
Trump's comments expanded on remarks he had made a day earlier, when he said he had banned Epstein from his private club in Florida two decades ago because his one-time friend "stole people that worked for me." At the time, he did not make clear who those workers were.

Trump said he was upset that Epstein was "taking people who worked for me." The women, he said, were "taken out of the spa, hired by him — in other words, gone."

"I said, listen, we don't want you taking our people," Trump said. When it happened again, Trump said he banned Epstein from Mar-a-Lago.

Asked if Giuffre was one of the employees poached by Epstein, he demurred but then said "he stole her."

Giuffre died by suicide earlier this year. She claimed that Maxwell spotted her working as a spa attendant at Mar-a-Lago in 2000, when she was a teenager, and hired her as Epstein's masseuse, which led to sexual abuse. She accused Epstein of pressuring her into having sex with powerful men. *—PTI*



Susan Monarez confirmed as director of CDC

The Senate confirmed Susan Monarez the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Monarez, 50, was named acting director in January and then tapped as the nominee in March. The agency, tasked with tracking diseases and responding to health threats, has been hit by widespread staff cuts, key resignations and heated controversy over long-standing CDC vaccine policies upended by Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr. At her confirmation, Monarez said she values vaccines and rigorous scientific evidence.

Harvard to hand over job forms to Trump govt

Harvard University said on Tuesday it will comply with the Trump administration's demands and turn over employment forms for thousands of university staff. However, it said it was not sharing records of those employed in roles exclusive to students, for the time being. In an email to its employees on Tuesday, Harvard said it received a notice of inspection and a related subpoena from the Department of Homeland Security. The authorities demanded I-9 or Employment Verification forms.

ASSAULT ON WOMEN, GIRLS

NZ Christian commune leader pleads guilty to abuse charges

WELLINGTON, 30 JULY

- Howard Temple, 85, admitted guilt three days into his trial at Greymouth District Court

The leader of Gloriavale, a reclusive and conservative Christian commune on New Zealand's West Coast, has pleaded guilty to charges of indecency and assault involving women and girls.

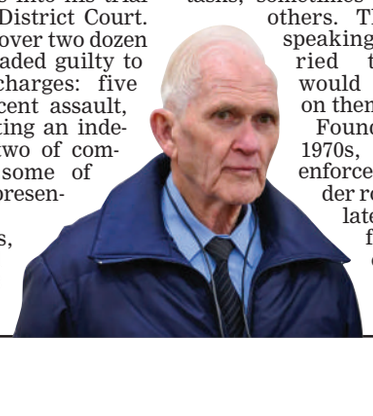
Howard Temple, 85, known as the Overseeing Shepherd of the 600-member sect, admitted guilt three days into his trial at Greymouth District Court. Initially facing over two dozen charges, he pleaded guilty to 12 amended charges: five counts of indecent assault, five of committing an indecent act, and two of common assault, some of which were representative.

The offences, committed between 1998 and 2022, involved nine complainants aged 9 to 20 at the time. Victims testified Temple groped them during domestic tasks, sometimes in front of others. They feared speaking out, worried the abuse would be blamed on them.

Founded in the 1970s, Gloriavale enforces strict gender roles and isolates members from the outside world. Women wear long dresses and head coverings, while men dominate leadership. Members share all possessions and sever ties with those who leave.

Temple, originally from the US and a former Navy serviceman, took leadership in 2018 after the death of founder Hopeful Christian, who was previously jailed for sexual assault.

The sect has faced scrutiny during New Zealand's wider abuse inquiry. Its 2024 final report said Gloriavale discouraged reporting crimes, enabling a culture of abuse. Less than a year before his arrest, Temple testified that the group had changed its response to abuse and claimed all victims were now believed. His 2022 apology was rejected as insincere by former members. *—PTI*



A delegation of the military attaches and diplomats from 13 countries visit a damaged Bddhist structure on Cambodia–Thailand border **PHOTO: PTI**

THAILAND, CAMBODIA CEASEFIRE HOLDS

BANGKOK, 30 JULY

Thailand and Cambodia reaffirmed their shaky ceasefire violation after days of fighting along their border, as China stepped in to negotiate with the two countries.

The ceasefire reached in Malaysia was supposed to take effect at midnight on Monday, but was quickly tested.

Thailand's army accused Cambodia of launching attacks in multiple areas on Tuesday, but Cambodia said there was no firing in any location. The Thai army then reported exchanges of gunfire into Wednesday morning but said there was no use of heavy artillery.

"Such act of aggression constitutes violation of the ceasefire agreement by Cambodian forces and their apparent lack of good faith," said Thailand's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday morning.

By Wednesday afternoon, however, both sides appeared to have reaffirmed their commitment to a ceasefire, with representatives appearing smiling in a photo with a Chinese vice minister Sun Weidong at a meeting in Shanghai. *—PTI*

Ugandan, South Sudanese troops clash, 4 killed

KAMPALA, 30 JULY

Troops from Uganda and South Sudan clashed along their border in a firefight that left at least four dead, a Ugandan military official said Wednesday, as tensions flared over disputed border demarcations.

Three South Sudanese soldiers were shot dead by Ugandan forces who retaliated after one of their soldiers was killed on Monday, said Maj Gen Felix Kulayigye, spokesperson for the Ugandan military. But Wani Jackson Mule, a local official in South Sudan's Central Equatoria state, said he received the bodies of five soldiers.

The firefight occurred in a remote part of northwestern Uganda, known as West Nile, when South Sudanese soldiers crossed further into Ugandan territory, set up camp and refused to leave, according to Kulayigye. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold climbs by ₹700 to ₹98,520/10g

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Cutting short the five-day losing streak, gold prices rebounded by Rs 700 to Rs 98,520 per 10g in the national capital on Wednesday due to fresh buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Tuesday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 97,820 per 10g. In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased Rs 650 to Rs 98,200 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. The yellow metal had settled at Rs 97,550 per 10g in the previous market close. On the global front, spot gold is trading flat at USD 3,330.33 per ounce. *—PTI*

PNB shares down over 1% as Q1 profit slips

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Shares of Punjab National Bank (PNB) fell by over 1 per cent on Wednesday after the bank posted a 48 per cent fall in standalone net profit for the June quarter. The stock dipped 1.10 per cent to settle at Rs 108.10 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it dropped 1.60 per cent to Rs 107.55. On the NSE, shares of the firm edged lower by 1.07 per cent to Rs 108.11 each. Punjab National Bank on Wednesday reported a 48 per cent decline in standalone net profit at Rs 1,675 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2025, on higher tax expenses. The state-owned bank had posted a net profit of Rs 3,252 crore in the year-ago period. *—PTI*

Hyundai Q1 net dips 8% to ₹1,369 crore

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Hyundai Motor India on Wednesday reported an 8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,369 crore for the first quarter ended 30 June, hit by lower sales in the domestic market. The auto major posted a net profit of Rs 1,490 crore in April-June quarter of the last fiscal. Total income declined to Rs 16,628 crore for the June quarter against Rs 17,568 crore in the year-ago period. The company's overall sales during the first quarter stood at 1,80,399 units, a 6 per cent drop as compared with 1,92,055 units in the same period last year. Domestic sales declined 11 per cent to 1,32,259 units in the June quarter as compared with 1,49,455 units in the April-June period of last year. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Varsity documents of Lenskart co-founder lost

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

In a surprising disclosure, eyewear giant Lenskart Solutions has revealed that co-founder and promoter Sumeet Kapahi is unable to locate copies of his Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) degree and marksheets from the University of Delhi. The revelation came in the company's draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), filed with India's markets regulator SEBI as part of its proposed initial public offering (IPO). Kapahi, who currently serves as Lenskart's Global Head of Sourcing, has reportedly made several attempts to retrieve the documents, including emailing the university, sending a formal letter, and applying through the university's online portal. A response is still awaited. The DRHP notes there is no assurance that the university will respond or that Kapahi will be able to trace the documents in future. *—PTI*

Microsoft restores services to Nayara before HC hearing

Russian Rosneft owns a 49.13% stake in Nayara Energy Ltd

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 30 JULY

Microsoft Corp has restored all services – including email access – to Russian oil giant Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy, just before a scheduled hearing in the Delhi High Court over the service suspension, sources said.

Earlier this week, Microsoft suspended its services to Nayara Energy after the European Union included the company in a new round of sanctions against Russia over the Ukraine war. In response, Nayara took the US tech giant to the Delhi High Court, which was scheduled to hear the matter on Wednesday.

However, sources familiar with the situation said that prior to the hearing, Microsoft reinstated full access to email, Microsoft Teams, and other services for Nayara.

A Microsoft spokesperson confirmed restoration of Nayara services.

Nayara had called the action by Microsoft unilateral *PHOTO: ANI*

"Microsoft is committed to supporting all its customers in India and worldwide, and has restored services for Nayara Energy. We are engaged in ongoing discussions with the European Union towards service continuity for the organization," the spokesperson said.

Nayara had called the action by Microsoft unilateral.

Rosneft owns a 49.13 per cent stake in Nayara Energy Ltd, formerly Essar Oil Ltd. Nayara owns and operates a 20 million tonnes per year oil refinery at Vadinar in Gujarat and runs over 6,750 petrol pumps across the country.

An investment consortium SPV, Kesani Enterprises Company, holds another 49.13 per cent stake in Nayara. Kesani is owned by Russia's United Capital Partners (UCP) and Hara Capital Sarl, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mareterra Group Holding (formerly Genera Group Holding SpA.).

The firm had said it has filed a petition before the High Court of Delhi seeking an interim injunction and resumption of services to safeguard its rights and ensure continued access to essential digital infrastructure.

"These steps are aimed at preventing any potential disruption to Nayara's ability to meet its obligations to Indian consumers and stakeholders," it had said. *—PTI*

TO SELL 5% JIO SHARES

Mukesh eyes India's biggest IPO at ₹50K cr

BENGALURU/NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, 30 JULY

PHOTO: PTI

With idea of making telecom units public, Reliance Industries is preparing to set up the biggest initial public offering (IPO) India has ever seen, said sources on Wednesday.

The Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Mukesh Ambani is planning to sell 5 per cent of shares in the company to raise Rs 52,200 crore.

NSDL

The initial public offer of National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) got fully subscribed within hours of opening for bidding on Wednesday.

The Rs 4,011-crore initial share sale received bids for 3,91,38,030 shares against 3,51,27,002 shares on offer, translating into 1.11 times subscription, as per NSE data till 1.24pm.

Non Institutional Investors part received 1.48 times subscription while the quota for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) fetched 1.18 times subscription.

The IPO will conclude on 1 August. The price band has been fixed at Rs 760 to Rs 800 per share.

Steel Infra Solutions

Steel Infra Solutions Company has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi seeking its approval to raise funds through an initial public offering. The IPO is a combination of fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 96 crore and an OFS of 1.42 crore equity shares, according to the draft red herring prospectus filed on Monday.

Cash Ur Drive Marketing & Sattva-Blackstone

Cash UR Drive Marketing, an outdoor media advertising company and Knowledge Realty Trust, sponsored by realty firm Sattva Group and Blackstone, announced the price band. Cash UR Drive Marketing set the price band at Rs 123-130 per share for its Rs 61-crore IPO, which will hit the capital markets on 31 July.

Sattva Group and Blackstone set the price band of Rs 95 to Rs 100 per unit.

—Agencies with PTI

Markets advance for second day as L&T shares rise 4.8%

MUMBAI, 30 JULY

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher on Wednesday driven by heavy buying in infrastructure major Larsen & Toubro.

Rising for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 143.91 points or 0.18 per cent to settle at 81,481.86. During the day, the barometer moved in a narrow range and rose by 281.01 points or 0.34 per cent to hit a high of 81,618.96.

The 50-share NSE Nifty rose by 33.95 points or 0.14 per cent to close at 24,855.05.

US trade deal uncertainty and foreign fund outflows restricted the gains to a large extent, analysts said.

Among Sensex firms, Larsen & Toubro jumped 4.87 per cent after the infrastructure major reported a 29.8 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 3,617.19 crore during the June quarter, driven by strong overseas order growth.

Sun Pharma, NTPC, Maruti, Bharti Airtel, Trent and Axis Bank were also among the gainers.

Tata Motors was the biggest loser among Sensex stocks, dropping by 3.47 per cent amid reports that the auto maker was in advanced talks to acquire the truck division of an Italian company in a USD 4.5 billion deal.

Stock exchanges have sought clarification from the company related to the reports.

However, Tata Motors, Power Grid, Eternal, Bajaj Finserv and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,636.60 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. BSE Midcap and Smallcap indices climbed 0.17 per cent each. *—PTI*

P&G Hygiene Q2 profit doubles to ₹192 crore

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Procter & Gamble Hygiene and Health Care Ltd reported a net profit of Rs 192 crore for the quarter ended 30 June, 2025, more than double the Rs 81 crore recorded in the same period last year.

Revenue from operations rose marginally to Rs 937 crore, compared to Rs 932 crore in the April–June quarter of 2024, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Shares of the company were trading 5.71 per cent higher at Rs 13,830.90 apiece on the BSE following the announcement.

The significant profit increase, despite modest revenue growth, points to improved operational efficiency or better cost management. *—PTI*

India projected to grow 6.4% in 2025–26, says IMF

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON, 30 JULY

India is projected to grow at 6.4 per cent in fiscal year 2025 and 2026, and the country's stable growth is driven by a reform momentum supporting robust consumption growth and a push for public investment, the International Monetary Fund has said.

The IMF released its World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update on Tuesday.

It said that growth in India is projected to be 6.4 per cent in 2025 and 2026, with both numbers revised slightly upward, reflecting a more "benign external environment" than assumed in the April reference forecast.

In a footnote, the IMF said that for India, data and projections are presented on a fiscal year basis. India's growth projections are 6.7 per cent for 2025 and 6.4 per cent for 2026.

During a press briefing, IMF Research Department Division Chief Deniz Igan, responding to a question on India, said, "We have actually quite stable growth" for the country. *—PTI*

Rupee slides steepest in over 3 years

MUMBAI, 30 JULY

The rupee plunged 89 paise, logging its steepest single-day fall in over three years, and closed at an all-time low of 87.80 against the US dollar on Wednesday after America announced a sweeping 25 per cent tariff on Indian imports in the absence of a trade deal ahead of the 1 August deadline.

Forex traders said month-end dollar demand from importers and sustained foreign fund outflows also weighed on the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 87.10 and touched an intra-day low of 87.05 against the greenback.

At the end of Wednesday's trading session, the local unit settled at a fresh all-time low of 87.80, down 89 paise over its previous closing price. This was rupee's steepest single-day fall since February 24, 2022, when it had lost 99 paise against the dollar.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said, "We expect the rupee to slide further amid uncertainty over the trade deal between India and the US. Rising global oil prices and foreign outflows may also keep the rupee under the leash." *—PTI*

Sona Comstar sends legal warning to Rani Kapur

MUMBAI, 30 JULY

Episode three of the Kapur family saga unfolded on Monday, as Sona Comstar part of the Rs 30,000 crore Sona Group issued a cease-and-desist notice to Rani Kapur, mother of the late ex-chairman, Sunjay Kapur, who died in England in June.

The notice accuses Rani of defaming the company and causing reputational harm. This follows her claims last week that she was coerced into signing documents endorsing the appointment of her daughter-in-law, Priya Sachdev Kapur, as a non-executive director. She also demanded the company postpone its AGM, citing "gross illegalities" in operations and claiming she had been misled without time to properly review what she was signing.

Rani said she is the sole beneficiary of her late husband Surinder Kapur's estate and that it includes a majority stake in the Sona Group.

Sona Comstar's parent firm, Sona BLW Precision Forgings Ltd., rebutted her claims, stating she has not been a shareholder since 2019. A May 2019 declaration listed Sunjay Kapur as the sole beneficial owner, with Priya Sachdev Kapur's board nomination following due process. *—Agencies*

Axiscades bags ₹600 crore orders in defence space

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Bengaluru-based Axiscades is a leading end-to-end engineering and technology solutions provider Axiscades on Wednesday said it has bagged new orders worth Rs 600 crore in defence space.

The orders involve development and supply of advanced sub-systems for "some of the most sophisticated indigenous platforms" being developed by leading Defence agencies like the DRDO and the Defence PSUs, Axiscades said in a statement.

The cumulative value of these orders stood at around Rs 600 crore.

The orders will be executed through Axiscades' subsidiaries operating in the defence space, over the next 3 to 5 years, the company said.

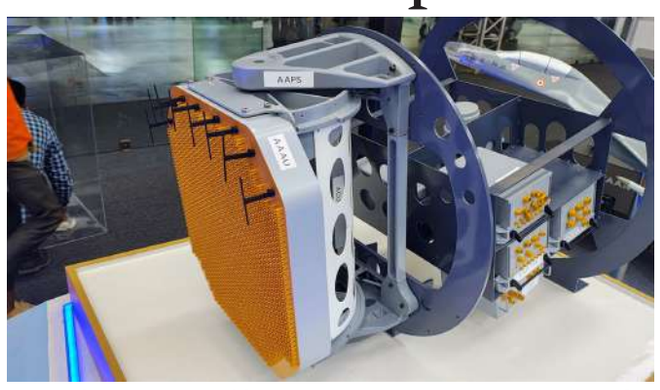


PHOTO: X/ ARIHANT_RAY

"We are contributing to indigenous platforms that will define the future of India's Defence preparedness," the company's Chief Technical Official (CTO) C Manikandan said.

In June, Axiscades Aerospace and Technologies, one of the subsidiary companies of Axiscades, had signed an agreement with European missile systems major MBDA to set up a defence facility in Karnataka. *—PTI*

IndiGo Q1 profit skids 20% to ₹2,176 crore

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

The country's largest airline IndiGo on Wednesday reported a 20 per cent decline in profit after tax at Rs 2,176.3 crore for the June quarter as airspace curbs and overall challenging operating environment crimped its bottom line even as the carrier flew 12 per cent more passengers during the period.

InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of IndiGo which had a domestic market share of 64.5 per cent in June, posted a profit after tax of Rs 2,728.8 crore in the year-ago period.

In the first quarter of the current fiscal, total income climbed 6.4 per cent to Rs 21,542.6 crore. In the year-ago period, the same stood at Rs 20,248.9 crore. *—PTI*

FORTUNE GLOBAL LIST

Reliance still highest-ranked Indian firm

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries has retained its position as the highest-ranked Indian company on the 2025 Fortune Global 500 list, according to the latest rankings released by the publication.

The oil-to-telecom-and-retail conglomerate has been ranked at No 88 on the latest list, down from 86th position in 2024.

However, the company has gained a whopping 67 places in the last four years, from No 155 in 2021.

US retail giant Walmart continues to be the top-ranked company in the world, followed by Amazon. The top 10 has three Chinese companies - state-owned electric utility State Grid at No 3, China National Petrol at No 5 and oil and gas giant Sinopec Group at No 6. World's largest oil exporter Saudi Aramco is ranked at No 4 and Apple at No 8.

PHOTO: ANI

India has 9 companies in the Fortune's Global 500 list this year - 5 of them from the public sector and 4 from the private sector.

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is ranked at No 95, unchanged from last year.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) slipped 11 slots to be ranked No 127 in the 2025 ranking.

Country's largest lender State Bank of India gained 15 slots to be ranked at 163, while HDFC Bank soared 48 places to come in at No 258. *—PTI*

Top 10 firms in Fortune Global 500 list

Walmart	(US)
Amazon.com	(US)
State Grid	(China)
Saudi Aramco	(UAE)
C N Petroleum	(China)
Sinopec	(China)
UnitedHealth Group	(US)
Apple	(US)
CVS Health	(US)
Berkshire Hathaway	(US)

Apple launches live help for shoppers in India

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

With a rising number of people browsing and shopping online, iPhone maker Apple on Wednesday announced a service that would enable customers in India to connect on a video call with an Apple specialist for personalised advice and help in comparing models when buying its products.

In a release, Apple said India is the second country to get this service, building on the company's expanding retail presence here.

Earlier this year, the company launched the Apple Store app in India for easier and more personalised browsing, buying and support experience.

"Apple today introduced Shop with a Specialist over Video in India, offering customers a new way to shop for Apple products on the Apple Store online. The service connects customers with an Apple Store team member via a secure, one-way video call to browse the latest Apple products, including the iPhone 16 lineup; discover new features; and learn about Apple's trade-in program, financing options and more – all from the comfort of their homes," Apple said. *—PTI*

- India is the second country to get this service, building on the company's expanding retail presence here. Earlier this year, it launched the Apple Store app in India

PHOTO: PTI

Ayush Shetty storms into Macau Open quarters

MACAU, 30 JULY

Seventh seed Ayush Shetty eased into the quarterfinals of the Macau Open BWF Super 300 tournament with a straight-game win over Chinese Taipei's Huang Yu Kai, here on Wednesday. World No. 31 Shetty made short work of the 66th-ranked Huang, winning 21-10, 21-11 in just 31 minutes. In mixed doubles, fifth seeds Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, ranked 18th in the world, outclassed Thailand's Ratchapol Makkasasithorn and Nattamon Laisuan 21-10, 21-15 in a brisk 26-minute encounter. However, it was the end of the road for Sathish Kumar Karunakaran in men's singles, as he went down to Malaysia's Justin Hoh 19-21, 12-21 in 37 minutes in the pre-quarterfinals.—*PTI*

India to kick off CAFA Nations Cup against Tajikistan

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

India has been drawn alongside Tajikistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Afghanistan in Group B of the CAFA Nations Cup 2025, with their campaign kicking off against hosts Tajikistan in Dushanbe. The Central Asian regional tournament, scheduled from 31 August -September 8, will serve as preparation for India ahead of the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Qualifiers Final Round. India's next two group matches will be against Iran on 1 September and Afghanistan on 4 September. The top two teams from each group will advance to the play-offs on September 8. Group winners will clash in the final in Tashkent, while runners-up will battle for third place in Dushanbe. Group A, to be played in Tashkent, features hosts Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, and invited side Oman. India and Oman are the two guest teams in the eight-nation event.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@BRYANT

Kobe honoured with a new jersey bearing brand logo

BARCELONA, 30 JULY

Spanish soccer club Barcelona is paying tribute to NBA legend Kobe Bryant with its second uniform launched Tuesday. The five-time European champion said its new jersey will replace the usual Nike swoosh logo "with the Kobe Sheath' the sword in the sheath logo that identifies the Kobe Bryant brand." Barcelona said the club had a special relationship with Bryant, who died in a helicopter crash in Southern California in 2020. He made appearances alongside club members and first-team players during his visits to Barcelona and when the club visited the United States.—*PTI*

NEROCA FC snatch a dramatic 1-1 draw

IMPHAL, 30 JULY

NEROCA FC snatched a dramatic 1-1 draw against 10-man TRAU FC in their Group E opener at the 134th IndianOil Durand Cup here on Wednesday. The Imphal Derby lived up to its billing as Raj Singh's second-half goal gave TRAU the lead, but a stoppage-time equaliser by Arunkumar Singh denied them all three points in a fiercely contested encounter at the Khuman Main Stadium. The match kicked off with NEROCA FC pressing high and dictating tempo early on. Despite flashes of attacking intent, neither side registered a shot on target in the first 30 minutes.—*PTI*

India refuse to play Pak in WCL 2025 semifinal

The decision comes after the AC schedule was announced

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

India Champions have decided to not play in the World Championship of Legends (WCL, according to sources. The decision will be in line with their previous stance which saw the side boycotting their group stage match against Pakistan as well.

Players like Yuvraj Singh, Shikhar Dhawan, Yusuf Pathan, Irfan Pathan, Piyush Chawla are members of the India Champions side.

India Champions entered the semifinals of the ongoing World Championship of Legends after defeating West Indies Champions in just 13.2 overs in their last group match on Tuesday.

The decision comes close on heels of the backlash that the BCCI is facing after the Asia Cup schedule was announced. India will play Pakistan in that continental event on 14 September.

There are chances that the two teams will face-off again on September 21 and 28, provided they advance to the next rounds.

After the Pahalgam terror attack in April this year, diplomatic relationship between the two countries nose-dived. Reports said that there was a chance that Asia Cup could be shelved.

However, nothing of that sort happened. Earlier, the league stage game between the two nations was officially called off, following strong objections from Indian players and a principal tournament sponsor, which was follwed by public declarations from former India cricketers, including Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan, who stated they would not participate in the match.

We cannot support any event that attempts to normalise relations with a country that promotes terrorism. The people of India have spoken and we hear them. —*PTI*

India Champions have reportedly pulled out of WCL semifinal PHOTO: PTI

EaseMyTrip pulled out

LONDON, 30 JULY

Sponsor EaseMyTrip pulled out of the India-Pakistan semi-final clash in the World Championship of Legends 2025, just hours after the Indian team sneaked into the semi-final spot with a solitary win in the tournament.

On Wednesday morning, EaseMyTrip founder Nishant Pitti put out a big message on X, publicly stating that they will not be supporting the India vs Pakistan clash in the Legends League.

Pitti congratulated the Indian team led by Yuvraj Singh on reaching the semi-final of the tournament, but stated that as an organisation, they believe that "terror and cricket cannot go hand in hand."

—*PTI*

ANDERSON TENDULKAR TROPHY

Captain Shubman Gill threw his weight behind Gautam Gambhir following his fiery exchange with The Oval's chief curator Lee Fortis PHOTO: ANI

Coach has every right to look at pitch: Shubman Gill

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

India captain Shubman Gill threw his weight behind Gautam Gambhir following his fiery exchange with The Oval's chief curator Lee Fortis, firmly asserting that the India coach was well within his rights to inspect the square. During India's training session on Tuesday, Fortis, according to batting coach Sitanshu Kotak, asked the Indian coaching staff to stay 2.5 metres away from the main pitch square, despite them not wearing spikes, prompting frustration from the visiting camp.

Gambhir was heard saying, "You don't tell any of us what we need to do... You have no right to tell us. You are just a groundsman, nothing beyond."

Stokes on missing Oval Test

Ben Stokes did not care about his injury-ravaged body while bowling those difference-making overs for England throughout the first four Tests, but he says the risk is far too high to go out one last time in the series for the team he leads from the front.

Stokes, the leading wicket-taker of the series with 17 scalps, will be a mere spectator at The Oval, robbing the series finale of his charismatic on-field presence.

No Jofra Archer, and possibly no Jasprit Bumrah in the opposition, also takes the sheen off what has been a riveting series. game starting Thursday.

Ben Stokes

Stokes will call the shots from the dressing room, but England will not have his invaluable service with both bat and ball. —*PTI*

After IPL exploits, Arya eyes Ranji debut

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

Having impressed one and all with his free-flowing and fearless approach in the IPL, young Delhi batter Priyansh Arya is now determined to translate his white ball form into the traditional format, becoming a red-ball regular for Delhi in the upcoming Ranji season. The young Delhi batter, who shot to fame through the Delhi Premier League, believes it's time to evolve beyond the shortest format."After DPL, I will start preparation for red-ball cricket.

Last year as well, I spoke about that I want to play that form of cricket," Arya told on Wednesday to PTI videos on the sidelines of Outer Delhi Warriors jersey launch event in New Delhi."I will seek advice from my coach, Sanjay sir (Bhardwaj), and prepare accordingly. I hope I will be able to make my red-ball debut and not just remain a white-ball specialist next season", he added.Much of Arya's growth can be attributed to his constant desire to improve. And for that, he continues to rely on his childhood coach Bhardwaj, who incidentally also used to be national men's team head coach Gautam Gambhir's Go-To Man during his playing days. —*PTI*

40 INDIAN BOXERS TO COMPETE IN ASIAN U19 AND U22 C'SHIPS

NEW DELHI, 30 JULY

India has sent a 40-member team for the Asian U19 and U22 Boxing Champion ships, starting on Wednesday in Bangkok.

The tournament, which will bring together 396 boxers from 26 nations, is being organised by the Asian Boxing in association with World Boxing and the Thailand Boxing Association.

It will feature two age groups, U19 (born between 2007 and 2008) and U22 (born between 2004 and 2006), with both men and women competing under Olympic-style boxing rules.

The Indian team features a strong mix of talent across both divisions. Leading the charge is three-time Asian Champion and two-time National Champion Vishvanath Suresh.

Joining him are National Championships medallists Sagar, Preet Malik, and Khelo India gold medallist Suman Kumari.

Boxers will compete across ten weight categories in each division. For U19 men, the categories range from 47kg- 50kg up to +90kg, while U19 women will fight in classes from 45-48kg to +80kg.

The U22 men and women will compete in the same weight ranges. —*PTI*

SWIMMING WORLD C'SHIPS

Leon Marchand breaks world record in 200 individual medley

SINGAPORE, 30 JULY

Leon Marchand broke the world record in the 200-meter individual medley on Wednesday at the world championships in Singapore, clocking 1 minute 52.61 seconds to surpass the 1:54.00 set in 2011 by American Ryan Lochte.

He set the mark swimming in the semifinals and, in theory, could break it again in Thursday's finals. Marchand won four Olympic gold medals a year ago in Paris, but he's swimming only the 200 and 400 medley and relays in Singapore. Planning the lighter schedule in what he calls a "transition year" keeps him fresh to chase the world marks. Marchand will swim the 400 IM on Sunday, the final day of the world championships. He holds the record of 4:02.50 set in the 2023 worlds in Fukuoka, Japan. —*PTI*

Leon Marchand breaks world record in 1 minute, 52.61 seconds PHOTO: X/@LEON.MARCHAND31

JADEJA RETAINS TOP TEST RANK, ABHISHEK LEADS IN T20IS

DUBAI, 6 JUNE

Ravindra Jadeja has tightened his grip as the world's No. 1 Test all-rounder, while young Indian opener Abhishek Sharma has surged to the top of the ICC T20I batting rankings, displacing Australia's Travis Head.

As per the latest ICC Men's Player Rankings released on Wednesday, Jadeja stretched his lead at the top of the all-rounder charts to 422 rating points, a full 117 points ahead of Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who sits in second place.

"Jadeja has inflated his lead at the top of the rankings for all-rounders after grabbing four wickets and scoring a fighting 107 not out," the ICC said in a statement. "He has added 13 rating points and is now on an aggregate of 422... He has also moved up five places to 29th among batters and up one place to 14th among bowlers." His teammate Washington Sundar also climbed the rankings after his maiden Test century, and a 203-run partnership with Jadeja helped India secure a remarkable draw in the fourth Test at Manchester. Sundar moved up eight spots to reach 65th among batters and is now joint-13th in the all-rounders' list after also claiming two wickets in the match. In the T20 format, Abhishek Sharma achieved a career-best ranking by climbing to No. 1 in the world with 829 points. The 24-year-old leapfrogged Travis Head, who now holds second place with 814 points after skipping Australia's 5-0 T20I series victory over West Indies. —*PTI*

Ravindra Jadeja

Abhishek Sharma

SC quashes lifetime ban on cricketer Karunakaran

BANGALOR, 30 JULY

The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside the lifetime ban imposed on former Kerala Ranji player Santhosh Karunakaran by the Kerala Cricket Association (KCA).

A bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta allowed the special leave petition (SLP) filed by Karunakaran against the 2021 rulings of the Kerala High Court, which had dismissed both his writ petition and subsequent appeal.

Karunakaran was banned in 2021 after he questioned the lack of reforms in district cricket bodies. He had earlier approached the KCA Ombudsman in 2019, seeking implementation of model bye-laws recommended by the Lodha Committee. The Ombudsman rejected his plea, saying he hadn't made the district associations party to the case. The Supreme Court observed that the Ombudsman's process lacked transparency and that Karunakaran was denied a fair opportunity to present his case. It also said that the High Court had been too harsh in dismissing his petitions. The Court restored his original plea and directed the Ombudsman to hear the matter afresh and pass a reasoned order within three months. —*PTI*

Xhaka completes move to Sunderland from Leverkusen

LONDON, 30 JULY

Granit Xhaka returned to the Premier League on Wednesday with a move to newly-promoted Sunderland.

The former Arsenal captain joined from Bayer Leverkusen and signed a three-year contract at the Stadium of Light.

The 32-year-old Xhaka spent seven years at Arsenal, where he won two FA Cups before moving to Germany and helping Leverkusen lift the Bundesliga title in 2024 as part of a league and cup double. At Sunderland, his primary task will likely be to help the club avoid relegation. "We are back to where this club needs to be, and we want to stay here to write our history. I feel that I'm ready to help the team with my experience, but with quality as well," Xhaka said.

Xhaka is the captain of Switzerland and has won 137 caps for his country.

Sunderland sporting director Kristjaan Speakman said the signing of Xhaka was a "significant endorsement of our ambition and our desire to build a team our supporters can be proud of in the Premier League."—*PTI*

Granit Xhaka

COPA AMERICA

Brazil's dominant first half secures final spot

SINGAPORE, 30 JULY

ith three goals in the first half-hour, defending champion Brazil eased past Uruguay 5-1 on Tuesday to qualify for the Copa America Femenina final for the fifth straight tournament.

Amanda Gutierres opened the scoring in the 11th minute, Giovana Queiroz doubled the lead two minutes later, and six-time player of the year Marta converted on a penalty kick in the 27th minute for the Brazilians, who have won the past four editions of the Copa America.

Gutierres added a goal in the 65th off a free kick, giving her five for the tournament. She's behind only Paraguay's Claudia Martinez, who has six. Dudinha finished off the scoring in the 86th.

Brazil's Marta, centre, celebrates with teammates after scoring her side's third goal against Uruguay PHOTO: X/@SELECAOFEMININA

Brazil will play for the championship next Saturday against Colombia, which progressed to the final by edging Argentina 5-4 on penalty kicks on Monday. The match will be played at Estadio Rodrigo Paz Delgado, in the capital Quito.

It will be a rematch of the final of the 2022 Copa America Femenina that was played in Colombia and which Brazil won 1-0.

The 39-year-old Marta, who has played in six World Cups and six Olympics, has 120 goals in 205 games with Brazil. Their best finish at the World Cup was runner-up in 2007, and they have reached the Olympic final three times, including in Paris 2024, where they lost to the US. —*PTI*